

# A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

WILLIAM W. ELLSWORTH





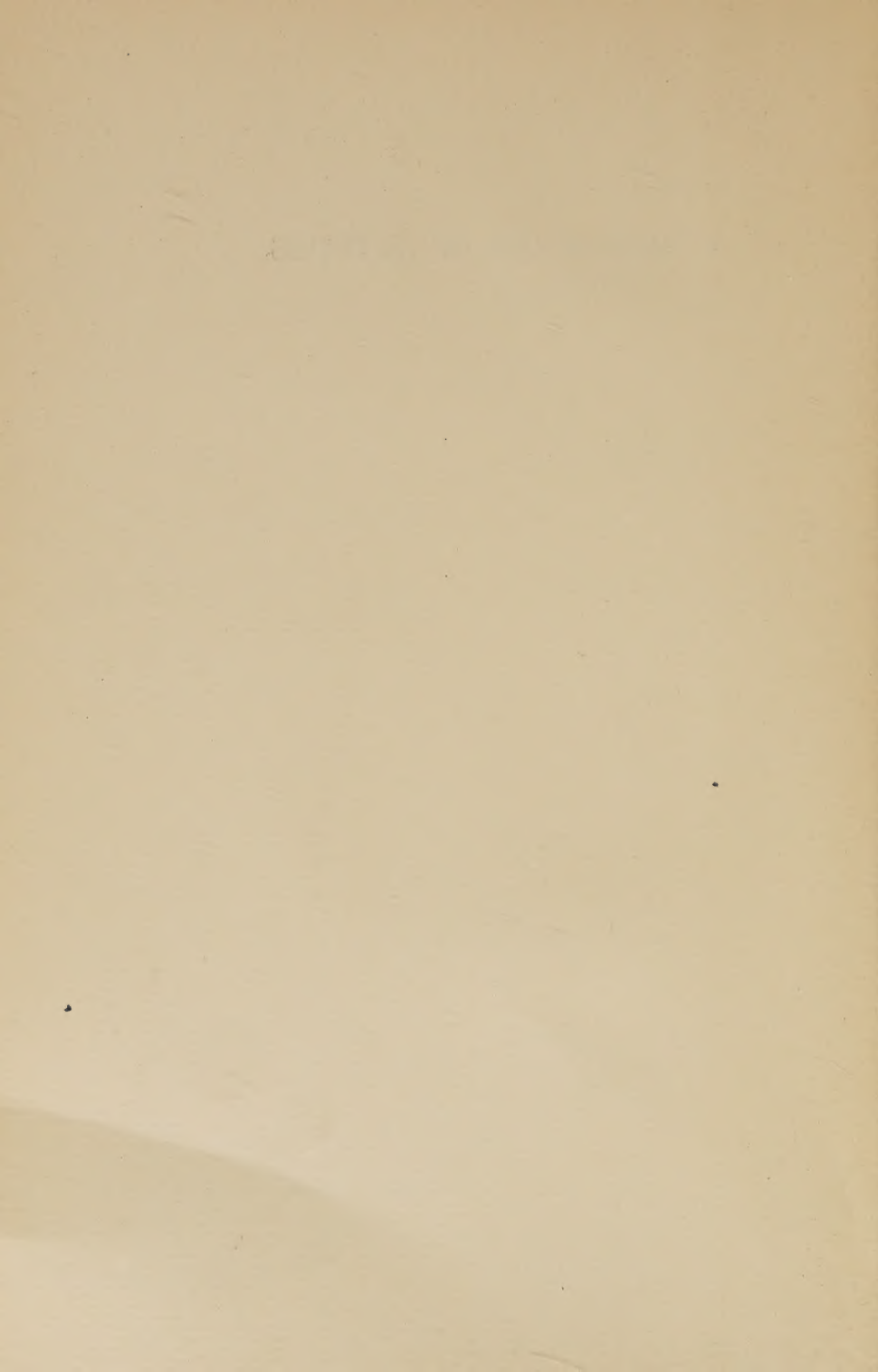
J. L. Dearborn  
from Eddie  
Nov 1919





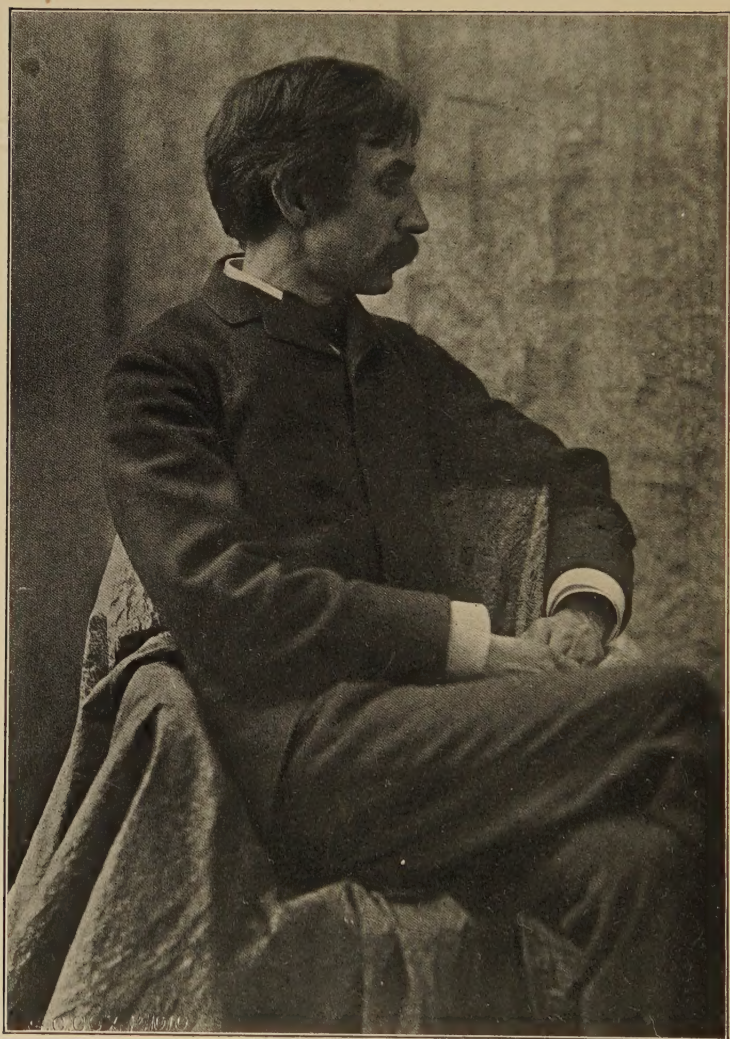


## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS









Mr. Ellsworth

for his friend

R. W. Green

April 20 —

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*A Publisher's Recollection*

BY  
WILLIAM WEBSTER ELLSWORTH

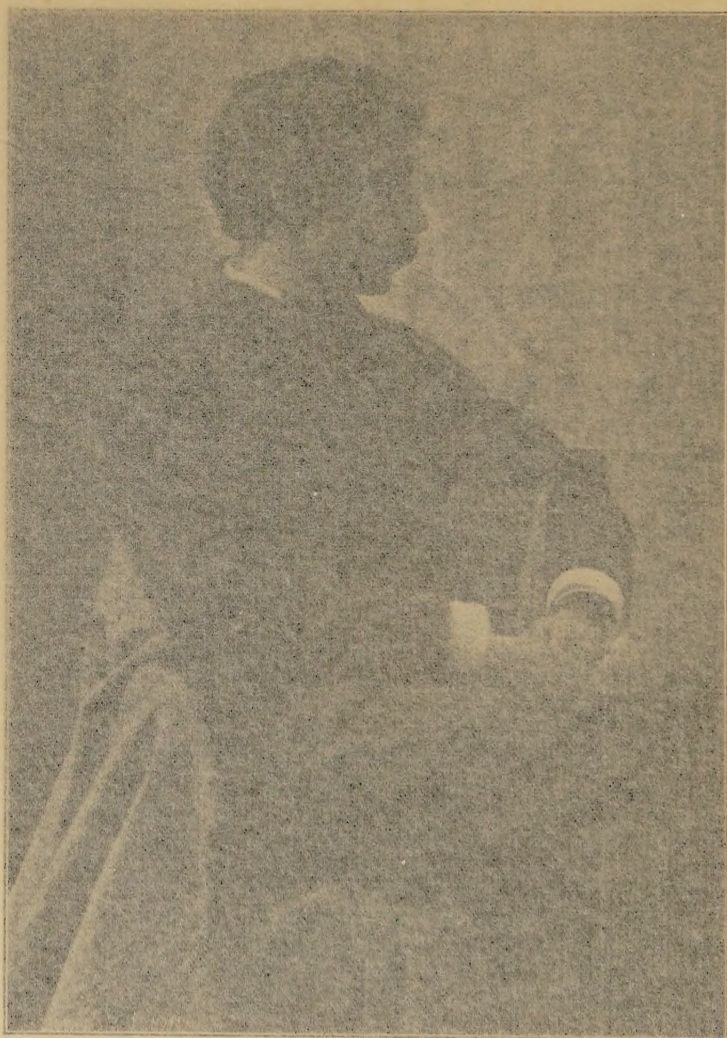
*With Illustrations*



BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY  
THE RIVERSIDE PRESS CAMBRIDGE

1919





M. H. Ellsworth

for his friend

R. W. Green

April 40 —

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1919

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TO  
FRED LEWIS PATTEE  
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE  
AT STATE COLLEGE, PENNSYLVANIA  
AND AUTHOR OF  
"A HISTORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE SINCE 1870"  
WHO FIRST GAVE ME THE IDEA OF  
WRITING THIS BOOK



## PREFACE

*THIS book is founded upon two lectures which I have been delivering since my retirement from The Century Company in December, 1915. Doubtless there are lines in it which should bear quotation marks, lines which may have been cribbed from books or articles. Unfortunately, as one cannot refer to footnotes in a lecture, no record was made of my reading, and the book will have to go forth as it stands, bearing apologies to the real authors whose work unwittingly I may have used.*

*The lectures are only the basis of the book and what is left of them is much changed. Of course if I were still a publisher, I could not have written so freely, but, being now out of the delightful hurly-burly, I can sit down calmly and recall some of the interesting events of which I have been a humble part. That the book contains much about one publishing house is excusable, perhaps, if the reader will realize that for nearly forty years I was a member of that house and have never been connected with any other.*

WILLIAM W. ELLSWORTH

*Esperanza Farm  
New Hartford, Conn.  
July, 1919*





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## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS



# A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

## CHAPTER I

*Publisher and author — An early Roswell Smith — Roswell Smith, founder of Scribner's Monthly — Dr. Holland — Early office work*

I WOULD rather be a writer of books — good books that add something to the world's knowledge or pleasure — than to be anything else that I can think of, even a president of the United States. President Franklin Pierce and Novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne were contemporaries and friends; the President did much for the novelist — but whose name has gone the farthest? If I cannot be a writer, I am content to have been a publisher, and so to have had a share in producing many more books than any one author could write. The publisher gets his reward in numbers, for he can bring out fifty or a hundred or more books a year — some publishers average a book a day — and his list becomes to him almost as his own family; and there have been publishers who were writers as well, but I had most of the writing taken out of me when I was a young man by an older publisher and my superior officer, who, when he found that I was inclined to write poetry, as I had tried to do in still callower days, told me

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

that he thought, perhaps, I could be a poet or a publisher but not both. "And, William," he said, "I have found that I can get a better poem written for five dollars than I can write myself, and I advise you to do the same." So for many years I have been paying other people for poetry, but every one knows that not much poetry can be bought to-day for five dollars; even "free verse" is n't free to publishers.

The man who frightened away my very feeble muse and who gave me in rich return the opportunity to work with him in my formative years, and so to learn what little I ever knew of business, was Roswell Smith, founder, with Dr. Holland and Charles Scribner, of Scribner's Monthly, now The Century. He was my mother's cousin, brought up with her by her father, Roswell Chamberlain Smith, an author of school-books, very successful in their day, — Smith's Grammar, Smith's Arithmetic, Smith's Geography, and similar works.

I well remember, as a little boy, going with my grandfather, Roswell Chamberlain Smith, to call upon Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, when my grandfather presented that lady with a copy of one of his newly issued geographies. The following letter from Mrs. Stowe's contemporary and neighbor, Mrs. Sigourney, has been for many years one of the treasures of my autograph collection:

## MRS. SIGOURNEY

*Hartford, Saturday, Nov. 21, 1857*

MY DEAR SIR: Our conversation last evening respecting the venerated Pastor of your earliest years reminded me of a slight sketch of him in a work of which I ask your acceptance.

My love to Mrs. Smith, and say to her how much I enjoyed and was cheered by being comprehended in her delightful social circle last evening at your elegant mansion.

Yours with respect

L. H. SIGOURNEY

I prize this not only because it is typical of our Hartford poetess, with its delightful allusion to being "comprehended," but because it is always pleasant to know that one's grandfather lived in an "elegant mansion." My grandfather had earned his mansion from the sale of his school-books. He started in life so poor that he could not afford to complete his college course, and in his last days he never tired of describing his early struggles and triumphs. One of his favorite stories was about a school examination which he had passed with great brilliancy, and the girls in the class, jealous of his success, gathered at the door as he went out and greeted him with "Soon ripe, soon rotten."

About the last public appearance of Roswell Chamberlain Smith in Hartford was at a reception given by Governor Marshall Jewell to General



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

Grant. At the time, Grant was President of the United States and Marshall Jewell his Postmaster-General. I was a boy, and went with my grandfather; and I remember standing by somewhat impatiently until, our turn coming in the line, he shook the general's hand long and ardently and poured into the general's ear his own name and the titles of some of his books. He was an old man and very proud of his textbooks. No response, a stolid, far-away look on the face of the hero of Shiloh. We passed on, and looking back, I saw that a local celebrity, Colonel George P. Bissell, was standing behind General Grant, and with his arm thrust under the general's was shaking hands with the guests. Obviously General Grant was tired and Colonel Bissell had come to his relief. My boyish delight in knowing that my grandfather had been all that time pumping the arm of Colonel George P. Bissell lasted for years.

Looking back upon Roswell Chamberlain Smith's textbooks, it seems sometimes as if in these days we have not made great progress in educational helps. The books had been supplanted in schools before my time, but I saw them around the house, and remember very well the peculiar property they possessed of making one remember what they taught. The opening question in Smith's Grammar was

## ROSWELL CHAMBERLAIN SMITH

“What is your name?” Pointed and interesting. Answering this, the pupil presently stumbled on the fact that his name was a noun, and that Boston was also a noun, being a name, and book was a noun too, so that “a noun is the name of any person, place, or thing.”

For many years before his death my grandfather was engaged upon a new geography for little children, which has never seen the light of day. In it he let his ideas of “emblems” in maps run riot. He had already used these “emblems,” — that is, tiny cuts of animals, etc., to a limited extent in one of his earlier primary geographies, — but in this there was a cut or two in nearly every square inch of the maps. You saw where whales were caught, where icebergs floated in the North Atlantic, where mines, forests, or fisheries were located and where elephants trumpeted through the jungle. I have often wondered whether later geographers made use of such cuts; certainly they gave to the child an instantaneous photograph of what was “doing” everywhere on the earth’s surface. Perhaps the educational “movies” of our day have taken their place.

The idea of “emblems” was not original with Roswell Chamberlain Smith. Dean Swift wrote a hundred years before:

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

“So geographers, in Afric’s maps,  
With savage pictures fill their gaps,  
And o’er uninhabitable downs,  
Place elephants for want of towns.”

The use of old-fashioned textbooks was not without good results. A fifteen-year-old boy who graduated from a New England district-school in the years 1840 to 1860, may not have known as much about as many things as a boy in a New York public school, but what he did know he knew thoroughly.

My father, too, was a bookman, a publisher, chiefly of school-books, with an office on Cornhill in Boston. He published, I remember, a series of readers and spellers which were translated into the liquid, vowelly language of the Sandwich Islands, and these as a little boy I loved to read aloud, translating the sentences with the aid of the English edition, where all the words were in a corresponding place on the page. Certainly books, or at any rate school-books, must be in my blood, for I read recently that my grandfather’s grammar “was at one time in the hands of more school-children than was any similar school-book except Webster’s Spelling-Book,” — and my paternal great-grandfather wrote the Spelling Book.

I knew that I wanted to have to do with books

## ROSWELL SMITH

from the time that Scribner's Monthly was begun in 1870, when I was fifteen years old; and then it was that my uncle-cousin, Roswell Smith, who loved me because he loved my mother, told me that some day there would be a place for me in the office. Long before, he had read law in Hartford and had made his home with my grandfather; my mother, who had been a sister to him for many years, gave him a word of advice as he went away, which he often told me had helped him more than anything else ever said to him. It was simply, "*Be* somebody, Roswell."

He went West to Lafayette, Indiana, and into the law-office and also into the family of Henry L. Ellsworth, a great-uncle of mine, who had been the first Commissioner of Patents — "the father of the Patent Office" he was called. He had been a friend of Samuel F. B. Morse, and interested in Professor Morse's experiments with the electric telegraph, and his daughter Annie had sent the first telegraphic message, that wonderfully appropriate passage from the Psalms, "What hath God wrought," which her mother found for her.

A letter in my file from Benson J. Lossing to Mr. Gilder, written in 1872, contains the paragraph: "Professor Morse, when telling me, several years ago, the story of his struggles at that time, men-

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

tioned his emotions when in the early gray of the morning of the 4th of March, 1843, Miss Annie Ellsworth announced to him, in the parlor of a Washington hotel, the joyful news that Congress had appropriated \$30,000, and the promise then given that the fair maiden should send the first message over the wires."

Professor Morse and Mr. Ellsworth had remained until very late at the closing session of the House of Representatives the night before, hoping for the passage of the appropriation. The inventor had finally gone away discouraged, but Mr. Ellsworth stayed until the bill was passed. Returning home he had his daughter Annie awakened that she might be the one to carry the news to their anxious friend.

With daughter Annie, Roswell Smith fell in love. There was a runaway match, forgiveness, and a settling down, but in time Roswell tired of Lafayette. He wanted a larger field; he had made some money, chiefly in real estate, and he determined to go East and buy a newspaper. Then came a trip to Europe with Dr. Holland, who was at the height of his popularity as the author of "Timothy Titcomb's Letters," "Bitter-Sweet," and "Kathrina." One evening on a Geneva bridge Dr. Holland made the proposition that they should start a magazine together, and Roswell Smith agreeing, departed



MRS. ROSWELL SMITH

Who, as a young girl, Annie Ellsworth, sent the first telegraphic message, "What hath God wrought "





## ROSWELL SMITH

for America with a letter of introduction to the senior Charles Scribner, who had been Dr. Holland's publisher. The joint-stock company of "Scribner & Co." was organized, Roswell Smith and Dr. Holland each taking three-tenths of the stock and the Scribner firm the other four-tenths.

The name Scribner's Monthly was given to the new magazine in honor of Mr. Scribner, for whom Dr. Holland had great respect, and Mr. Scribner's magazine, *Hours at Home*, ceased publication when the new venture was launched.

With Richard Watson Gilder as Dr. Holland's chief assistant, and Alexander W. Drake in charge of the art department (the two younger men were to work together for forty splendid years), there began with Scribners in 1870 the publication of a magazine which undoubtedly did more for the cause of American letters and a popular knowledge of good art, than any other single force.

Roswell Smith was one of the few publishers I have known who made money without the commercial spirit. He was successful with whatever he undertook, but *The Century Magazine* was his chief money-maker. His object was to do great and useful things. He had faith to believe that with what measure ye mete it shall be meted unto you. He never sought a great magazine feature just because

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

it was great, — War papers or Lincoln Life or any other, — never simply as a circulation-builder, but always because he believed it to be worth doing, and if he were right the public would respond. He was a religious man; he opened the annual meeting of the stockholders of The Century Company with prayer. He believed that God would bless him in basket and in store if he did his duty. When he purchased the Scribner interests he needed in cash a little over \$100,000, to complete the payment. At just that time a railroad was put through some coal property which he owned in the Middle West, and he sold his mine for \$110,000 in cash. There was nothing remarkable about it to him; he needed the money, and the Power which he depended on, and which always helped him, saw that he had it. And the years that Roswell Smith opened the annual meeting with prayer were the best years the company ever had.

Going with Roswell Smith to visit Dr. Holland long before becoming connected with the house, I remember the doctor's kindly encouragement of my youthful poetic efforts, and Mr. Smith's endeavor to switch me into a business path. But like some other publishers he was inclined to be a little envious of editors and writers. He wrote two short stories for St. Nicholas, and although he had called me down

## ROSWELL SMITH

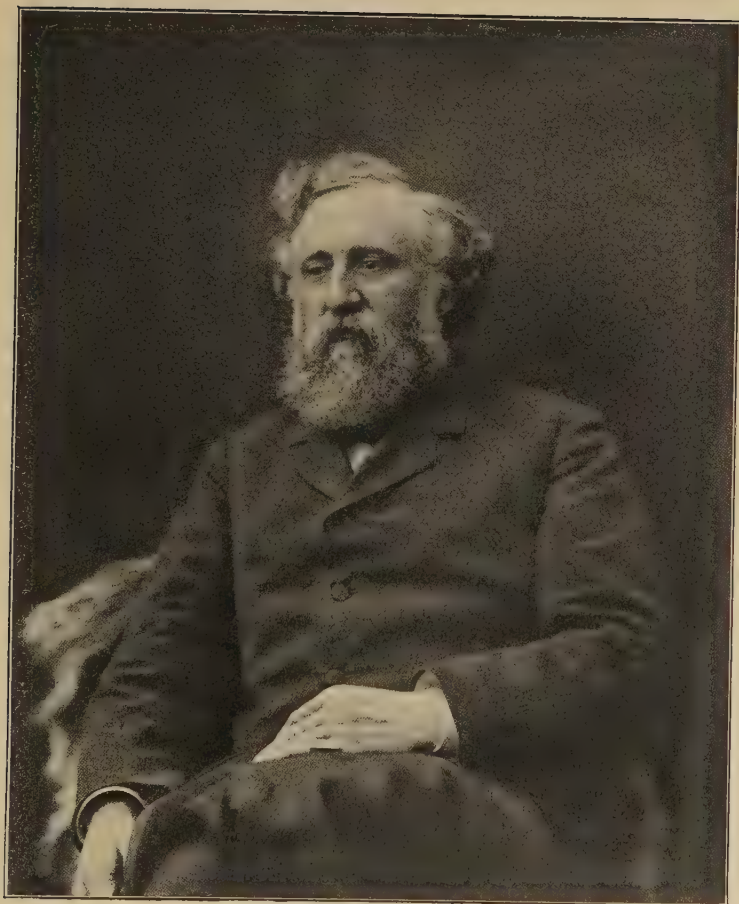
for writing poetry, he once produced a poem. It turned out to be a sort of drinking song, and it never would do for Roswell Smith to print a drinking song, so he called his poem, "What the Devil Said to the Young Man," which effectually disguised it.

Roswell Smith was largely responsible for two great improvements in magazine postal matters, pre-payment of postage by the publishers and mailing in bulk, paying at the post-office for a bag of magazines and not being obliged to put a stamp on each unit in it. When Scribner's Monthly began, magazine subscribers paid their own postage quarterly, and it was a nuisance to hand out twelve cents or seventeen cents every once in a while over the post-office counter. But as few people took more than one magazine and a weekly religious paper, it was not as much of a nuisance as it would be to-day when nearly every household is apt to take in half a dozen periodicals. Other publishers opposed the change — the public was already paying the postage, why should the charge be transferred to the publisher? Roswell Smith was far-seeing enough to know that pre-payment by publishers would remove one of the fences between the magazine office and the public, that magazines would be more popular and that the publishers would get back their money several times over.

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

When Congress takes up the question of raising the rates of postage on magazines — a favorite pastime of Congress — not enough consideration is given to the enormous first-class mail that is created by the magazines, the subscriptions sent in and the receipts sent out and all the correspondence referring to them, the millions of answers to advertisements and the advertisers' replies, the orders sent in from these replies, and the goods sent out by the advertisers; the manuscripts sent back and forth at high postal rates — about as many "back" as "forth." No business produces so much postage revenue in subsidiary ways.

I remember my first morning in the office, helping Roswell Smith to open the mail. It was not so large then that except in the subscription season he could not give personal attention to every business query. Now it takes several people to care for the morning mail. I was soon put on the publicity work of St. Nicholas; that and publicity work for *The Century* and later the *Dictionary* and the many books, was one of my jobs for years. And I thoroughly enjoyed it. To write an advertisement is n't quite like writing a sonnet, but there is a satisfaction in doing it well, in stating facts honestly, in making people interested in what you tell them. A letter once



ROSWELL SMITH





## THE PUBLISHER

came from a man saying that he liked everything we did and the way we did it — a letter which gave me much comfort.

Nobody should seek to be a publisher unless he loves books and wants to have to do with them. If one wants to make money, let him go into the steel business or into something in which there is money to be made, for there is very little in books and magazines unless they are pushed in a purely commercial spirit, and if they are — why, then it were much better not to publish them at all. There are magazines to-day which the world would be better off without. Unfortunately the business has attracted men who have no ambition in the field of literature or culture, whose product is sold in great quantities and with about the same spirit as if it were bricks or clams, — and this is said without intended offense to good men who are marketing those useful commodities.

The young man who wants to fit himself to be an editor or a publisher cannot learn too much, — there is no limit to the subjects that may later come before him.

He must know literature. When we were preparing Theodore Roosevelt's "Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail" in 1888, — the make-up was in my hands, — Mr. Roosevelt sent in a verse to be



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

placed on the leaf before the opening page. He did not give the name of the author or the name of the poem, and I wrote to him to find out. Think of my not knowing this was from Browning's "Saul"!

"Oh, our manhood's prime vigor! No spirit feels waste,  
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew unbraced.  
Oh, the wild joys of living! . . ."

I was thoroughly ashamed of my ignorance and the shame has lasted for thirty years. That verse was a favorite text with Mr. Roosevelt all through his wondrously busy life.

And the young publisher should know political economy as well as literature. As a young man, I breakfasted in London with Mr. James Bryce, — he was not yet a peer. He was preparing to write "The American Commonwealth" and he asked me many questions about American election affairs, especially town-meetings. Some I could answer, but not all. Alas! I had never attended a town-meeting.

## CHAPTER II

*New York in the seventies — Mary L. Booth's receptions — Edwin Booth — Richard Harding Davis — Ion Perdicaris — Back to Edgar Allan Poe — General Sherman — The Scribner firm — First women clerks — R. L. Stevenson — Frank R. Stockton — William Carey — Helen Hunt Jackson*

THE New York where I went to live in 1878 was a very different city from the one we know to-day. There were no sky-scrapers, and by reason of it the city seemed more flooded with sunshine (or was that youth?); the peremptory tinkle of the telephone bell had not become an interrupter of confidences; no automobiles went about the streets; people were sometimes run over by cabs or trucks or horse-cars, but in a more leisurely and less dangerous way. The horses drew the cars far off uptown where nobody lived and you wondered where the cars went and why. The upper West Side streets were cut through great rocks where goats dwelt, and to the children seemed like the Swiss chamois which they read about. The first apartment-house (it still stands in East Eighteenth Street) had only just been built. If you did not keep house in a brown-stone front (it seemed as if there must be a law requiring every house to be faced with that gloomy surface) you boarded in one.

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

Fifth Avenue was all residences to Twenty-third Street; and beyond Fifty-ninth, the east side of the street; now millionaires' row, was as great a waste as the upper West Side. I could have bought land there that would have made me a little Croesus. Others did.

We made New Years' calls — in tall hats and "Prince Albert" coats. We went forth, men only, at 10 A.M. and worked till dark; then went home and changed into evening clothes and went at it again until midnight. The number of calls was incredible, unbelievable to-day — sixty, eighty, and more. If the people were not receiving they hung out a basket, you dropped in a card and it "counted." You visited every one you ever knew and many you did not see again until another New Year came around. Of course I called on many women writers and writers' wives and artists' wives and other publishers' wives and the wives of the men in my office. When you went to bed you had eaten at least ten plates of salad, twenty ices, thirty pieces of cake, and had drunk — well, that depended upon yourself. If you were "strictly temperate" you might have consumed not more than five or ten glasses of wine through the day. Some drank all they could hold, and if they could hold a great deal and the *coup de grace* did not come until late in the festivi-

## MORRIS PHILLIPS

ties, they managed to get through with an untarnished shield. One may be glad that the day of the New Years' call passed long ago. When it passed it went out suddenly. One year you made calls, the next year you did not — nobody did, and you never heard of it again.

I felt a kind of connection in these days with the early writers, Bryant and Halleck and Willis through Morris Phillips, whom I knew. He must have been a grandson of General Morris, founder of the New York Mirror. He was editor of the Home Journal, a society paper founded by Willis, and a successor to the Mirror. Thomas Bailey Aldrich was once its assistant editor. I saw Phillips often at the Saturday evenings of Miss Mary L. Booth, editor of Harper's Bazar, in her home in the thinly populated quarter of Fifty-ninth Street and Park Avenue. Those weekly receptions, with simple refreshments of lemonade, ice-cream and cake, attracted the literary people of the time, — Mrs. Mary Mapes Dodge, Stockton, Stedman, Stoddard, Edgar Fawcett. The hostess's cousin, Edwin Booth, came in sometimes; a sad, gloomy man he was then, — it was not long since his wild young brother had slain Lincoln. I remember him standing with folded arms in a corner, talking little. He told me that such a party was agony to him, for his hearing was so

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

painfully acute that he could hear even a whisper across the room — and everybody talked at once at Miss Booth's. Later, I came to know him well and love him, in the days of his retirement at The Players, which he had founded and furnished to the last teaspoon, as a place where men of his profession, who frequently knew few people in any other walk of life, should meet authors and artists and men of various pursuits.

When Richard Harding Davis was elected into The Players a few men were asked to meet him, including Mr. Booth. Davis noticed that the walls were covered with old playbills which he was told had been presented by the members. Thoughtlessly, but with good intention, he said, "Why, I have an interesting theatrical relic which I would like to give to the club. It is the playbill used at Ford's Theater in Washington on the night that Lincoln was —" Mr. Booth threw up his hands and turned away.

I heard the end of that incident only a little while ago. I had told the story in a lecture before the School of Journalism in Columbia, and, after it, Talcott Williams, director of the school, told me that Lawrence Barrett had given him the rest of the story. When Mr. Booth went upstairs to his room, Davis followed him, to apologize for his

## EDWIN BOOTH

thoughtlessness. "Do not apologize," said Mr. Booth, — "I really took satisfaction in your forgetting. It shows that at last there are some people in the world who do not associate me with Lincoln's death."

I was present at the Academy of Music on the night that Booth played Iago to Salvini's Othello, the night that the illness first became apparent that caused his death, a gradual loss of the power of locomotion. He stumbled over the chain which guarded the footlights. Salvini held the attention of the audience, while others gathered around Mr. Booth and helped him to a seat. It was a sad night for the friends of the great actor — the greatest that our country has ever produced.

Mr. Booth's most intimate friend for many years was William Bispham, and in his family my cousin, Katharine B. Wood, made her home. Miss Wood, whose knowledge of Shakespeare and of the playwrights of his century was unsurpassed, was put in charge of the readers and of the work of collecting quotations for *The Century Dictionary*, and the result of her labors may be seen now in the many appropriate quotations with which the book abounds — quotations so good that in many cases they act as definitions. If Miss Wood had had her way many more would have been included. Mr.



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

Booth knew Miss Wood well, through his intimacy with Mr. Bispham, and when I joined The Players in 1889 he was very kind to me, because he thought I looked like my cousin. He made me feel that I was his guest in the beautiful club which he had founded and where he passed his last years.

Others besides Miss Mary L. Booth who had "literary" receptions in those days were Dr. Holland, Mrs. Botta, and "Aunt Fanny" Barrow — she wrote children's books under the name of "Aunt Fanny." I remember an afternoon reception at Mrs. Barrow's to meet Ion Perdicaris, the Greek-American resident of Tangier, who, years after, was captured and held for ransom by the brigand Raisuli, and Secretary Hay's famous dispatch, "Perdicaris alive or Raisuli dead," will be well remembered. Perdicaris did come out alive, but it cost him a large ransom. His visiting cards were very cosmopolitan, — in one corner "Tangier, Morocco," in the other "Trenton, New Jersey." When "Aunt Fanny" had her tea, Mr. and Mrs. Perdicaris had come to New York to give Mrs. Perdicaris's daughter an opening on the stage. Mr. Perdicaris wrote the play and painted an enormous allegorical picture, as large as a drop-curtain, which as part of the play was unveiled in the last act. He engaged

## ION PERDICARIS

a supporting company, hired the Fifth Avenue Theater, and all literary New York went on Monday night. It ran till Thursday and cost him \$30,000. I visited him later in Tangier; the great picture was installed in the house, running up through two stories.

Perdicaris did some work on an autobiography not long ago. It would have been more interesting if it had contained a full account of his experiences in Morocco, but he was so hurt by his treatment by Raisuli, whom he had long known, and after he himself had spent a lifetime caring for the people of Tangier and its neighborhood, feeding the hungry, bringing comfort to the captives in the hideous prison-pens, that he could not bring himself to write with any fullness of a land which had shown him such ingratitude.

I can go back vicariously in New York before the days of Dr. Holland and "Aunt Fanny" Barrow — back to the time when Edgar Allan Poe was editing a paper and not long after he had written "The Raven" and sold it for ten dollars. My father-in-law, Morris W. Smith, was a young man then, just beginning a business life in New York, sweeping out the store, and he lived in the same boarding-house with Poe, who was in the depths of poverty. Each boarder had to heat his own room, and my

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

father-in-law lent Poe a stove to keep him warm, and sometimes helped him out with his board money.

Had I been wise enough to keep a diary these recollections would be more worth while. How easy it would have been! Between 1882 and 1894 I lived in Yonkers, a suburb of New York, and I could have spent the half-hour on the train every evening making notes of the interesting happenings of the day and of the people who came in — so many clever people! I have found that those who do things in the world, who write or who are men and women of action, are generally the best talkers. I shall never forget General Sherman, as he stood before Gilder's fire for two hours one afternoon, — a tall, lank figure, his hands under his coat-tails, — and marched through Georgia. Why could we not have had a stenographer behind the door, or why did not some of us write down our recollections of that talk? I suppose because such happenings were frequent — it was all in the day's work. And Paderewski is another good talker, and perhaps with a wider knowledge of the world than had General Sherman. He speaks seven languages with equal ease — “if one is a Pole any other language except Chinese is child's play.” He can talk about breeding chickens

## THE CENTURY

or the curves of the Parthenon, and he is a capital story-teller.

As the years went on, Roswell Smith began to publish books as well as magazines — so many grew naturally out of serial publication in his magazines; and the younger Charles Scribner, who had succeeded his father and an elder brother, who died young, feeling perhaps that his was the book-house, made Roswell Smith an offer either to buy him out or sell out to him. Mr. Smith instantly chose the latter. At the same time, Dr. Holland, believing that his life would not be long, sold his stock to the younger men and to Mr. Smith. The name of the magazine was changed to *The Century* and the company to *The Century Company*. (It was Gilder's suggestion from the Century Club.) This was in the autumn of 1881. To change the name of the magazine seemed at first a serious matter, but it did not create a ripple; the new name was printed in red several times across the old on the cover, and in a few months it took its place as the real name.

Five years later the Scribner firm started their own periodical *Scribner's Magazine*, which has been especially strong in fiction and in the good work of the younger American authors. Its illustrations under Mr. Joseph H. Chapin's management have

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

been admirable. Probably Theodore Roosevelt's African series has been its most noteworthy serial. I remember standing in the window of Mr. Robert Bridges's office — he was assistant editor of the magazine at the time, now the editor — and watching the procession pass up Fifth Avenue, Theodore Roosevelt the figure of honor. It was when he returned from Africa and he had begun to send the material of his African series to Bridges for serial publication. Bridges told me afterwards that when Mr. Roosevelt was back in this country he never failed to return every proof sent to him the day it was received. When young people tell me they are not able to answer a letter until some days have passed because they are "busy," I think of Mr. Roosevelt and a few other "busy" men I have known, who manage somehow to answer their letters on the day they are received, barring emergencies.

For the first three years of my connection with the company the office was on the third and fourth floors of the building at 743 Broadway, the Scribner firm having their store on the ground floor. The stairs were hard for Dr. Holland, who developed a heart trouble (he died of angina pectoris in November, 1881). His office was in the north front corner



DR. J. G. HOLLAND





## WOMEN AS CLERKS

on the third floor, with Gilder and Robert Underwood Johnson, assistant editors, close by. The next room was the editorial quarters of St. Nicholas, the children's magazine which had been started in 1873. Roswell Smith had a small room in the rear, and the rest of us including a number of women clerks were scattered about the large central room.

Roswell Smith was one of the first business men to employ women in nearly every clerical capacity. At that time there was hardly a woman in the financial quarter of New York. I was a young man in an insurance office in Hartford, Connecticut, when the first woman clerk known in the Hartford insurance business went to work in a near-by office. And if her brother had not been with her it would hardly have been considered respectable. Roswell Smith found that not only did women do good work — everybody knows it now — were careful and methodical, but that they were contented to stay in one place if it was a good place. Young men are apt to be more ambitious — and no blame to them — and want to move up, but a magazine office has some tasks, like keeping lists of subscribers, that it is very desirable to have people continue in for a long time, for their familiarity with the lists makes them valuable. I believe that *The Century*, since it was

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

established nearly fifty years ago, has had only three women, not including their helpers, in charge of its subscription lists.

A clerk in a publishing office does not always acquire a complete education, notwithstanding the somewhat rarefied atmosphere in which he lives. The Atlantic printed recently an amusing letter written to one of its readers by the publishers of The Smart Set regretting their inability to tell her whether there was such a magazine as The Atlantic or not — they had never heard of it. Doubtless that letter was the work of some young person in The Smart Set office, perhaps a little too young to be entrusted with the task of answering inquiries.

I recall the case of a young woman, a new clerk, who came to me and said, "I notice that The Century prints considerable poetry each month." I complimented her on her keen observation. "I used to write pretty good poetry," she continued, "when I was in the high school, and I think perhaps I could furnish the magazine with all it wants, and then you could increase my salary. It might appear under different names." At that moment what Mr. Alden once wrote of an editor was applicable to a publisher: "When the unprecedented is presented to his mind he is likely at first to be bewildered." She did not

## ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

stay with us long, but sometimes as I pick up my valued contemporaries I say to myself, "Well, she got her job."

Another clerk, a young man, was behind the counter one day when a stranger called and asked if any stories were wanted. He was a rough-looking stranger, who, it seems, had just come off an emigrant ship. Anything he cared to leave would be handed to the editors, the boy told him. The stranger turned and went out; The Century had lost Robert Louis Stevenson!

Years after, when it had won him back, Stevenson told Gilder of this call, and looking at him sharply from head to foot, said, "I don't know but it was you I saw. Yes, I think it was you, now that I look at you." But Gilder was n't the man, though he was properly frightened by Stevenson's well-feigned recognition. He proved an alibi, for he was in Europe at the time, but he said afterward that he would have made the same answer to Stevenson that the clerk made.

I never saw Stevenson. It was after we had moved to Union Square that one day meeting Henry C. Bunner, editor of Puck, as I was on my way to luncheon, he hailed me with "Oh, Ellsworth, go over to Brentano's and get a book in the Sea-Side Library called 'The New Arabian Nights,' by a

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

new man named Stevenson." That was a happy meeting with "the new man named Stevenson."

In *The Century* for February, 1883, there appeared an article in the department "Literature" on Stevenson's "New Arabian Nights," beginning: "A few months ago an English book made its appearance in this country, handicapped with the name of 'New Arabian Nights.' It was, for a time, no more warmly welcomed than might have been the 'New Rabelais' or 'A Nineteenth Century Nibelungen Lied' or 'Robinson Crusoe' with all the modern improvements. Then, by and by, one or two of the chorus of indolent reviewers glanced at the first page, read the second, and of a sudden found themselves *bolting* the rest of the book, and finding stomach for it all. . . . This new feast has a fine, literary smack to it. . . . Any one who reads the 'Nights' and the four stories that are bound with them must be struck by the author's versatility, his power of picturesque description, his skill in drawing character with half a touch, and his all-pervading humor." Which indicates that the writer of *The Century's* "Literature" department did not lack appreciation of quality.

With the issue for November, 1883, Stevenson's "The Silverado Squatters, Sketches from a California Mountain," began as a serial in *The Century*.

## FRANK R. STOCKTON

Looking this up in the index to get the exact date I find another contribution of Stevenson's — long-forgotten, perhaps. It was in "Bric-à-brac," a department which printed the very best humor of the day (one recalls Bunner's classic fooling, printed in that department, "Home Sweet Home," as Whitman and Swinburne and Bret Harte and others would have written it). In "Bric-à-brac" for March, 1885, appears the following:

"Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson writes to a friend who had just left England for America: 'You will meet Stockton:

"If I my Stockton should forget,  
It would be sheer depravity,  
For I went down with the *Thomas Hyke*,  
And up with the Negative Gravity.'"

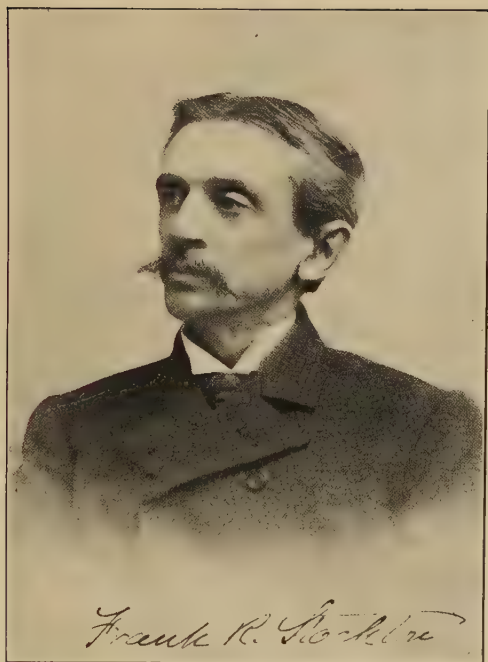
Stockton was one of the assistant editors of *St. Nicholas* when I joined the office force, working under Mrs. Mary Mapes Dodge and alongside William Fayal Clarke, who is now the editor and is carrying on the best traditions of Mrs. Dodge, with sympathetic comprehension, also, of the needs and tastes and especially the patriotic impulses of the American young folk of to-day. Stockton's "Rudder Grange" stories had appeared at odd times in *Scribner's Monthly*, the first in November, 1874; and they were gathered into a book by the Scrib-



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

ner firm in 1879. It was at about this time that Stockton left St. Nicholas to make authorship his profession. As to "Rudder Grange" it may be said that the author himself had never lived in a deserted canal boat (though he was always moving into odd suburban places), but he knew some people who did and he made up "Rudder Grange" out of what might have happened to them. It has always seemed to me that "Rudder Grange" was an example of perfect humor, at least if the faculty of getting enjoyment from it by repeated readings is a test. Pomona's "'I was a-lookin' at the moon, sir, when pop! the chair bounced, and out I went'" is as funny to me now as it was when I read it for the first time. And the reading aloud of that remarkable serving-maid — "'Ha, ha! Lord Mar mont thun der ed.'" "'My conscience!' said I to Euphemia, 'can't that girl be stopped?'"

As may be imagined from his works, Frank Stockton was a man of great sweetness, full of lovable qualities. He was slightly lame and never seemed to be in very good health, and it was a great delight to him and to Mrs. Stockton to go away on frequent trips to Nassau or to Europe, and to write up their experiences. He looked at life in a beautiful way; he was kind and every one was kind to him, and he gathered only flowers as he went along.



Frank R. Stockton



## WILLIAM CAREY

Stockton's most famous story was "The Lady, or the Tiger?" which appeared in *The Century* for November, 1882. Heaven knows how many languages it has been translated into and how many solutions of the puzzle have been offered. Stockton himself never made or wanted to make a solution — he was satisfied to write the story. Its success was perhaps helped by the title, and for that Will Carey, of *The Century* editorial room, was responsible. Stockton had called it "The King's Arena" and had gone away to Europe leaving it to be published. The editors cabled asking permission to change the name to Carey's suggested title, "The Lady, or the Tiger?"

William Carey was a very clever young man who died in his early forties — more than clever; Mark Twain called him the wittiest man he ever knew. He was a little inclined to stoutness, which usually makes for good humor, but not necessarily for wit. He had a face that always wore a smile, and he knew everybody and was universally loved. He had charge of proofs, sending them back and forth between author and printer, and seeing that the forms of *The Century* went to press on the proper date. His desk was near the door in the editorial room and few came in who did not stop there for a chat before going on to more serious business with

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

one of the editors. Sometimes they remained a long time. A great general came in one day and stopped for a few light words — they were always on tap at Carey's desk. "What do you say to strolling up to Delmonico's for luncheon?" said the general. Carey was agreeable; luncheon was apt to be something of a rite with him, not to be abused by a bowl of crackers and milk in any cheap joint. At about half past three they returned, and the great general was ready to attend to less important matters with the editors.

Carey would always remember to do the right thing, to get the right present, to send the right book for a "bread-and-butter" gift. If the wives of any of the office force were out of town and wanted shopping done, they seldom troubled their husbands, always Carey. I can see him now walking along Forty-second Street one hot summer day, piloting George W. Cable and his family to the Grand Central Station, a Cable child holding each hand and one or two following behind. It was when the Cables moved from New Orleans to Northampton, Massachusetts; and who so able to help in the migration as Carey? It was suspected at the time that Carey had been guilty of taking some of the younger Cables — who knew little of the frivolities of the world nor had possibilities of acquiring much

## WILLIAM CAREY

further knowledge — to a *matinée*. But I hesitate even now to make this known.

When an acquaintance of mine was growing deaf some one asked him, in Carey's presence, if he understood German. "Understand German!" broke in Carey, "why, bless your soul, he does n't understand English."

He was ill when a mutual friend was to be married, and for the third time; "Ah," said Carey, "I am so sorry I can't be there. I have always wanted to go to one of ——'s weddings." The cutting down of his vacation one summer was cheerfully met: "Never mind, half a loaf, you know." One day Brander Matthews came into the office wearing a very short overcoat which allowed some six inches of the tail of his undercoat to show. Being twitted, he explained that he had bought the undercoat in Paris and the overcoat had been ordered from London. "Ah," said Carey, "another 'Tale of Two Cities.'"

The sale after his death, of the autograph letters, autographed books and manuscripts which Carey had preserved, will be long remembered by collectors. There were over seven hundred items in the collection. Few living American authors were unrepresented; for had not Carey been sending them proofs and getting back letters for twenty years?



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

Among the volumes of letters from James Whitcomb Riley, which his nephew Edmund H. Eitel is now editing, are more than fifty to Carey — all of them whimsical, affectionate.

In London literary circles — and I think Carey was never in London but once and then only for a short time — he made lasting friends as easily as in New York. Austin Dobson wrote and dedicated a poem to him. On this same European trip Carey was to join me in Rome. My wife and I, with three children — the oldest then ten years of age — and a governess, had spent the winter in Mediterranean countries. At Naples the older little girl fell ill. We had made the ascent of Vesuvius on the day of a serious eruption and in the climb from the funicular railway to the crater we were all more or less overcome by the sulphur-impregnated smoke from the volcano. We thought this was the cause of the little girl's illness, but as she did not grow better, we took the train for Rome, where there was an American doctor. On his first call came the shock of our lives. He was sorry to have to tell us that in all probability our daughter had contracted smallpox, but he could not be sure until the next day. The only cheer he left with us was the announcement that if his fears were realized he would take the patient at once to his own apartment (allowable in



WILLIAM CAREY AT TWENTY-FIVE AND AT FORTY

Mark Twain called him the wittiest man he ever knew



## WILLIAM CAREY

Rome, where the thought of a pest-house was torture) and give her back to us in a few weeks. Then came Carey, full of optimism, comforting. He took the other two children off for the afternoon, he was with us through the evening; at bedtime he made me go with him for a walk over Rome, — from the Villa Borghese to the Colosseum, through the poor quarter, around St. Peter's, up the Janiculum, — all over the city we tramped and he talked. And after the burden was lifted and the case proved to be only a rather serious form of measles, he was untiring in his efforts to keep us amused and the children happy.

If one analyzes the quality which William Carey possessed of conferring happiness as he went along, one finds — beyond the *bonhomie*, the repartee which always satisfied and never hurt, the flashes of wit that were long remembered — the greater qualities of kindness and thoughtfulness, the going out of his way to give pleasure to others. All these he had to a degree which I have never seen so strongly developed in any human being.

The Boys' Club of Avenue A was one of the chief mourners when he died, and the summer camp of the club, paid for by Carey's friends and in his memory, is known as "The William Carey Camp."

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

It was in "the old office" as we called it, at 743 Broadway, that I remember seeing Helen Hunt Jackson. She came running upstairs one morning overflowing with laughter, and Dr. Holland asked her what had so amused her. She was in New York trying to awaken an interest in the Indians. "Oh, those Bostonians," she said; "I just met a Boston man on the street, and he asked me how I was getting on with my work in New York. 'Slowly,' I told him, — and said the Boston man, 'Well, I should think after that editorial in yesterday's Boston Advertiser, everybody in New York would be interested!'"

Mrs. Jackson was a most prolific writer of fiction, poems, essays, travel articles, and every conceivable form of literature. Dr. Holland is said to have once had an idea of issuing a number of Scribner's Monthly made up entirely of her work. She wrote the Saxe Holm stories and at least two of the novels in the anonymous "No Name" series which Roberts Brothers so successfully published. One of them was "Mercy Philbrick's Choice."

The Saxe Holm stories were famous in their day. I have a number of letters from Mrs. Jackson to Dr. Holland, most of them referring to their writing. It was her intention at first to have "Mercy Philbrick's Choice" appear over the Saxe Holm name,

## HELEN HUNT JACKSON

but for some reason she changed her mind, perhaps because the letters indicate that the magazine did not want it for a serial. She shows her pleasure later in the praise which came to "Mercy Philbrick's Choice" — "very much stronger than any of the Saxe Holm stories and far better written" was one opinion; "the style is exquisite" was another.

In June, 1876, Mrs. Jackson considered the publication of an article in the New York Tribune which was to be called "A History of the Claimants," in which she would show up various people who said they wrote the Saxe Holm stories: "this whole account to be signed, sealed, and delivered by Saxe Holm himself, herself, itself, themselves, and published by authority. It is really time to put a stop to — and the rest. . . . *Three* women in different parts of the country all claiming to be the author of stories they never wrote! I think the article would be huge fun, besides advertising the new story splendidly."

For some reason Mrs. Jackson did not wish the public to know that she was Saxe Holm. It was a literary puzzle once, but the Saxe Holm stories have not lived like "Ramona," and it is on that book that Helen Hunt Jackson's reputation will rest.



### CHAPTER III

*American literature in 1870 — Harper's Magazine — The first number of the new Scribner's Monthly — Its contemporaries — Charles Dudley Warner — The Great South papers — George W. Cable — William Dean Howells*

WHEN Scribner's Monthly began, in 1870, American literature, except for that furnished by the group of men writing in or near Boston, was at a low ebb, and even in Boston very little fiction was being produced. Professor Pattee in his "History of American Literature since 1870" says: "No wonder that the book reviewer of Harper's Magazine for May, 1870, with nothing better before him than 'Miss Van Kortland,' Anonymous; 'Hedged In,' by Miss Phelps; and 'Askaros Kassis,' by De Leon, should have begun his review, 'We are so weary of depending on England, France, and Germany for fiction and so hungry for some genuine American romance, that we are not inclined to read very critically the three characteristic American novels which lie on our table.'"

Poe, Irving, Cooper, and Hawthorne had passed; Mark Twain had just begun; the nearest that Howells had come to fiction was in the book, "No Love Lost; a Romance of Travel," really a long

## AMERICAN LITERATURE IN 1870

poem in hexameters, published in 1868. Bret Harte's first book of fiction, "The Luck of Roaring Camp, and Other Sketches," came in 1870. It is easy to see why Professor Pattee began his study of modern American literature with that year, for it marked a dividing line between the old and the new, and Scribner's Monthly, born in 1870, did a goodly share toward helping on the renaissance.

The plain people in America were only just beginning to find out that they could write. Great fiction writers had been living and writing in England, Dickens, Thackeray, Wilkie Collins, George Eliot, Charles Kingsley, Charles Reade, Trollope. (Dickens died the year that Scribner's Monthly began.) The output of these writers was so remarkable that they may be said to have kept back the rest of the world. And yet I heard an author say not long ago that it was his belief that if any one sent to a publisher to-day the kind of novel that Thackeray and Dickens produced, they would be declined, nor would the public care for them if they appeared. I could not agree with him. When I was reading book manuscripts if a new "Vanity Fair" or "David Copperfield" had turned up among them I could not imagine hesitating very long over it, nor a public that would not extend a welcoming hand.

When Scribner's Monthly came into being Har-

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

per's Magazine had been for years printing the novels of these writers in serial form, paying good prices for advance sheets with right of use. There was no international copyright in those days; any publisher could bring out the book as soon as the last installment appeared in a magazine. The Harpers paid £1250 for serial rights in "Great Expectations," and Charles Reade was considered nearly as much of a card as Charles Dickens, for he received £1000 for "The Woman Hater." Thackeray evidently was not very highly regarded, for he had only one hundred dollars a month for "The Virginians." These relative prices are interesting to-day, after the place of each author has been fixed in the world's esteem.

It is said that just after the Civil War Harper's Weekly fell off in circulation to such an extent that its owners considered the advisability of discontinuing it, but the publication of Dickens's "Our Mutual Friend" kept the Weekly's head above water for six months, and then Wilkie Collins's "Armadale" was begun, and with the very first installment that great mystery story began to send up the circulation until it soon reached its war-time figure. Dickens and Wilkie Collins are not in the same class to-day, but in life Collins was the better circulation-builder of the two.

## HARPER'S MAGAZINE

Harper's Magazine had run Macaulay's "History of England" as a serial, and had balanced that great piece of historical writing with John S. C. Abbott's "Napoleon," criticized even on publication for its "fairy tales of history." But what could be done with an author who sent word to his publishers that "he made every line he wrote the subject of prayer, and what he wrote he believed to be the truth, and he could make no changes"?<sup>1</sup>

Those of us who were brought up on the bound volumes of Harper's will remember also the papers by "Porte Crayon," David Hunter Strother, who had come out of the Civil War as a brevetted brigadier-general in the Union Army — delightful descriptions they were of life in the Virginia mountains, with the author's own quaint illustrations.

The new Scribner's Monthly was to be a force in building up American literature, but for its first year's serials, to so low a point had native fiction fallen, its conductors had to look to Great Britain, and George MacDonald and Mrs. Oliphant, both Scotch by birth, were engaged. The first number opened with an anonymous poem (it was written by Dr. Holland) "Jeremy Train — His Drive."

<sup>1</sup> For several of these statements in regard to the Harper publications I am indebted to *The House of Harper*, by J. H. Harper.

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

It covered, with its thirteen illustrations, seventeen and a half pages. Bunner's "The Way to Arcady," which, years after, was turned down because of its length, would not have occupied one third the number of pages.

The first prose article was instructive, "The Bottom of the Sea," and there were others of a similar character. Rebecca Harding Davis began a three-part serial, "Natasqua"; there was a very heavy gun fired by W. C. Wilkinson, "The Bondage of the Pulpit." An announcement of the new magazine was the first item in Dr. Holland's department "Topics of the Time." The editor's chief interest was in this department, where he could print his lay sermons which had been so well liked by great numbers of people in Timothy Titcomb's "Lessons to Young People," "Lessons in Life," etc. His long poems had been astonishingly successful.

Dr. Holland was a natural teacher, and "Topics of the Time" gave him an opportunity for all the rest of his life to speak his messages of uplift to thousands of people.

Of that first edition of the magazine forty thousand copies were printed and there were never fewer. The circulation increased rapidly. Gilder had a department, "The Old Cabinet," lighter than Dr. Holland's, where he said whatever came into his

## SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY

mind whether prose or verse. Other departments were added from time to time, "Culture and Progress," "Home and Society," "The World's Work." The latter was edited (and written) for many years by Charles Barnard, and I can recall his article suggesting photography as an occupation for amateurs. That certainly seems a long time ago. On the strength of Barnard's suggestions my wife bought me a photographic outfit, and I took pictures of everything in sight.

Some years later I made a trip to the Mediterranean, with my family, and I took with me the first kodak I had ever seen — a long, oblong box which made only round pictures, and you pulled a string to do it. In Tangier the natives dislike photographs — a reproduction of one's Mohammedan self in a picture may make trouble for the original in another world — and I carried my kodak done up like a brown-paper parcel, a small hole in the end for the lens, another for the string. It worked fairly well excepting that the click sometimes betrayed me.

Dr. Holland's early "Topics" would not be liked to-day, — nor would he write them, — but he broadened as the years went on. Life in New York, where he rubbed against all kinds of people, and above all the unconscious, sweetening influence of his young associate, Gilder, did much to change



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

his point of view, opening up the Puritan prison-house which he had built for his soul — at any rate putting a piazza on it. He always appreciated Gilder. Here is a letter from Dr. Holland to Roswell Smith, written the year after the magazine started: “Gilder ought to have \$2500 a year. All of this sum over and above \$1500 he ought to leave in our hands until the close of the year, when it should be presented to him in a good bond that will become a source of income. He is twenty-eight years old and it is time for him to begin in earnest about a fortune.”

Neither Gilder nor any of the “younger men” in the place ever made a fortune or thought about it. They worked in a happy atmosphere of mutual respect and devotion — they were interested in great things and in important movements. If Dr. Holland’s idea had been carried out and two fifths of their salaries had been held back for the purchase of “a good bond” at the end of the year, perhaps they would have saved more money, but families increased, home life broadened, entertaining was a part of the job, using the money seemed more important than putting it into bonds, and the “younger man” who saved much out of his income was a rarity. It did not seem that there could ever be a rainier day. The young men had a chance to buy stock from time to time, always at a fair market price.

Two Sonnets.

I hasten homeward, through the gathering mists,  
Tow'ring the dear ones who in exultance sweet  
Await the coming of my weary feet,  
With faces in the hearth-fire glowing bright,  
And please my heart with every lovely sight  
Of merry, warm reightrons, stepping from the street  
Through clovers thrown wide and bursts of light that greet  
Their entrance, planting all their paths with white,  
And then I think, with a great thrill of bliss,  
That all the world, and all of life it brings,  
Tell me true tales of other realms than this,  
As faithful types of spiritual things;  
And so I know that home's rewarding kiss  
Assumes the hope of heaven that in the springs.

P. G. Holland

A SONNET BY DR. J. G. HOLLAND



## SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY

The chief contemporaries of Scribner's Monthly at its beginning are its contemporaries to-day, The Atlantic and Harper's. It may be interesting to look over a list of the writers who furnished the material for these three magazines at the time Scribner's Monthly began its career — not all of the writers, for most of them are forgotten, but here is a list of the contributors to the volumes for the year 1871 whose names may still be recalled by most of the older magazine readers of to-day:

### *Scribner's Monthly*

|                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Elizabeth Akers Allen   | J. G. Holland         |
| Hans Christian Andersen | Helen Hunt Jackson    |
| S. G. W. Benjamin       | Edward King           |
| John Bigelow            | G. P. Lathrop         |
| Horace Bushnell         | Benson J. Lossing     |
| Alice Cary              | George MacDonald      |
| Titus M. Coan           | Mrs. Oliphant         |
| Susan Coolidge          | Mrs. S. M. B. Piatt   |
| Rebecca Harding Davis   | Abby Sage Richardson  |
| Mary Mapes Dodge        | L. Clark Seelye       |
| Edward Eggleston        | E. C. Stedman         |
| Thomas Dunn English     | R. H. Stoddard        |
| Washington Gladden      | W. O. Stoddard        |
| Gail Hamilton           | Adeline Trafton       |
| J. R. G. Hassard        | H. T. Tuckerman       |
| I. I. Hayes             | Charles Dudley Warner |
| J. T. Headley           | W. C. Wilkinson       |
| N. P. Willis            |                       |

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

There were more than one hundred and fifty of them in all.

### *The Atlantic Monthly*

|                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Thomas Bailey Aldrich | Helen Hunt Jackson      |
| Edward Atkinson       | Henry James, Jr.        |
| Bret Harte            | Clarence King           |
| Alice Cary            | Lucy Larcom             |
| R. H. Dana, Jr.       | Henry W. Longfellow     |
| J. W. De Forest       | Louise Chandler Moulton |
| George Eliot          | Mrs. S. M. B. Piatt     |
| James T. Fields       | John G. Saxe            |
| John Fiske            | E. C. Stedman           |
| John Hay              | Bayard Taylor           |
| T. W. Higginson       | Celia Thaxter           |
| Oliver Wendell Holmes | Col. George E. Waring   |
| W. D. Howells         | John G. Whittier        |

John Hay's "Castilian Days" was printed serially and there were serial novels, "A Passionate Pilgrim" by Henry James, Jr., and a forgotten novel by J. W. De Forest. Bret Harte wrote three short stories, including "A Romance of Madroño Hollow." Howells's "Their Wedding Journey" was an unforgotten feature, and Holmes's "Dorothy Q" another. There was much in that volume of *The Atlantic* that is alive to-day; indeed, of the three magazines, Harper's, *The Atlantic*, and the new Scribner's Monthly, certainly *The Atlantic* ranked first in literature.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In a review of the booklet, *The Atlantic Monthly and Its Makers*,

## HARPER'S MAGAZINE

### *Harper's Magazine*

|                     |                           |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Lyman Abbott        | Benson J. Lossing         |
| J. S. C. Abbott     | Justin McCarthy           |
| Junius Henri Browne | "Petroleum V. Nasby"      |
| S. S. Conant        | William C. Prime          |
| Moncure D. Conway   | John G. Saxe              |
| Dinah Mulock Craik  | Harriet Prescott Spofford |
| James De Mille      | R. H. Stoddard            |
| Thomas Dunn English | Bayard Taylor             |
| Julian Hawthorne    | Thurlow Weed              |

The leading serial novel in this volume of Harper's was "The American Baron" by James De Mille. Lyman Abbott's contributions were practical, "Glass-blowing as a Fine Art," and "The Re-

recently issued, the New York *Evening Post* of January 7, 1919, printed the following: "When we think of the founding of *The Atlantic Monthly* we think of that marvelous first issue which contained contributions from Longfellow, Motley, Emerson, Lowell, Charles Eliot Norton, Holmes, Whittier, Mrs. Stowe, Trowbridge, and Parke Godwin. We do not start magazines nowadays with such poetic contributions as Longfellow's poem on 'The Lady with the Lamp,' Whittier's 'Tritemius,' Emerson's 'Days' and 'Brahma,' Lowell's 'The Maple,' and such prose as 'The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table' and Emerson's essay on 'Illusions,' all in the first number. Holmes began with the words, as every reader of 'The Autocrat' knows, 'I was just going to say, when I was interrupted —.' It has often been recalled that a score of years before he had been interrupted in somewhat similar essay-chat by the failure of the magazine which accepted his writings. But what a familiar, pleasant way of beginning a serial in a brand-new magazine! And what a pleasantly clubby atmosphere was imparted by having several authors represented by a number of contributions — Emerson by no less than five!"



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

covery of Jerusalem." The Editor's Drawer then as now was wide open, but its cheerful items began usually with those somnolent phrases, "We are indebted to one of the leading —— for the following," or "We have from a Georgia correspondent," or "Another from the same source." In our day jokes are born we know not where, but in the sixties and seventies somebody was responsible for each of them.

Mr. Alden, editor of Harper's, wrote of the friendly competition which soon developed between his magazine and Scribner's, "If you are driving a spirited horse and another mettlesome steed comes alongside, your horse naturally leaps forward, rejoicing in a good race."

Scribner's from the first number printed the author's name in the monthly table of contents (not with the contribution), and at its beginning some of the magazines were doing the same, but they had not always done so — the individuality of authors had not been regarded in the past as a very important matter. The earlier magazines printed no authors' names at all; later a *nom de plume* was in fashion, "Waverley," "Boz," "Elia," the easiest to recall. Sometimes the names appeared in an index at the end of the volume; not always, for editors wanted you to like their magazine — never mind

## CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER

who wrote it, sometimes they wrote it all themselves. James Russell Lowell, when an editor, in 1859, said, "I have always been opposed to the publication of authors' names at all." Looking back one can see that the publication of authors' names must be an incentive to better writing, a fair stimulus to an honorable ambition. And yet there was plenty of good writing in the days when individuality was no more considered in magazines than it is to-day in the newspapers.

In the second year of Scribner's Monthly came Charles Dudley Warner's "Backlog Studies," which, if "Ik Marvel" had not written "Reveries of a Bachelor," might be read now. I was a boy in Hartford when Warner's "My Summer in a Garden" appeared as occasional articles in the Hartford Courant, of which he was one of the editors (perhaps they were printed regularly — was it not Monday morning, when news was apt to be scarce, that they were run in?). Hartford was amused over these gardening episodes, where the author fought "pusley" as if it were original sin, but Hartford had no idea that it was reading literature. The public of to-day knows Warner best from his "Library," a collection of prose and verse of which he was editor-in-chief, and yet Warner wrote much that was good and should be enduring — "Saun-

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

terings," "My Winter on the Nile," "The Golden House," and his studies of America — "journalistic," the critics call them. His part in "The Gilded Age" did not equal Mark Twain's — the play, "Colonel Sellers," was made up from Mark Twain's chapters.

Saxe Holm's first story, "Esther Wynn's Love-Letters," and Frank R. Stockton's first Scribner story, "Stephen Skarridge's Christmas," were in this second year of the new Scribner, and there was a Lancashire story, "Surly Tim's Trouble," by Fanny E. Hodgson, who was later to become Frances Hodgson Burnett, and under that name to do much good writing — and seldom a bad villain in her books, for Mrs. Burnett's personal belief in happiness has tempered all her literary work.

It was in November, 1873, that Scribner's began its first important series of papers, "The Great South," by Edward King, who made a trip through the Southern States in the interests of the magazine, accompanied by J. Wells Champney, artist. The end of the Civil War was not ten years away, and in these papers the North was made acquainted with the vast resources of the South, and the South was pleased and flattered by the attention. The result was most helpful in creating good feeling

## GEORGE W. CABLE

between the sections, and this feeling was further increased by the War series fifteen years later.

A by-product of King's trip, of more importance to the world than "The Great South," was his discovery of George W. Cable, the first American to use his own surroundings for a background in what was real literature. Bret Harte was a pioneer and should have the credit of a pioneer, but George W. Cable was a great literary artist. He had been a clerk in the New Orleans custom-house, and at seventeen a private in the Confederate army; later an unsuccessful newspaperman. When King reached New Orleans, Cable was working by day in a cotton factor's office, and at night, in his own time, beginning to write his marvelous tales of the Creoles of Louisiana, and King sent some of Cable's work to Dr. Holland. "'Sieur George" appeared in October, 1873, and others came within the next few years, "'Tite Poulette," "Jean-ah Poquelin," "Café des Exiles," and more; revelations of a new world peopled with Spanish aristocrats; French of the *ancien régime*, men of stately grace, women as delicious as Dresden china figures touched by a god with life. The book containing them came out in 1879. It must have been just after this that Cable journeyed to New York by steamer from New Or-

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

leans, and I met him as he landed, a foreign-looking, slight man, delighted with the wonders of the Northern metropolis. We rode in the "Elevated" — it was quite new then — and Cable sat in the last seat of the last car, looking out on track and buildings with all the delight of a boy. In November, 1879, Scribner's Monthly began the publication of Cable's first novel, "The Grandissimes." He was one of the greatest "finds" of the new magazine.

I am not writing a history of American literature, simply endeavoring to record my personal impressions. It is a temptation to go through the old volumes of the magazines of that day, but I refrain, for I did not know personally many of the writers. One I knew, William Dean Howells, who still lives and writes as these pages are written. Some of his most popular novels, including "A Modern Instance," "A Woman's Reason," and "The Rise of Silas Lapham," the latter his best-selling book to-day, were published serially in Scribner's Monthly and The Century; but in 1886 he made a contract to write for another magazine. He sent me recently a letter which he had found in his files — it was from Roswell Smith, written to Howells when he left us, a fine letter, full of appreciation for what he had done for our magazine and bidding him god-

## WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

speed in his new relation. It was a great satisfaction to the conductors of The Century to have this splendid writer, dean to-day of American letters, come back into their fold with "The Leatherwood God" in 1916.



## CHAPTER IV

*Bret Harte — John Hay — Noah Brooks — Thomas Nelson Page —  
Irwin Russell — Edward Eggleston — Walt Whitman*

ONE of my first jobs in the office was to dispose of a Christmas story which Bret Harte had sent us too late for use in our Christmas number, but as he had already arranged for its publication in the Christmas issue of an English magazine it had to be printed in this country at once. I took it to Mr. Charles Anderson Dana, of the New York Sun, the only time I ever saw Mr. Dana, and I got a most delightful impression of him from the interview. Yes, he would take the story at one hundred and fifty dollars if the money could go to Mrs. Harte, whom Bret Harte had left in America. It was so arranged, by cable with the author, and the Sunday Sun printed the story, paying Mrs. Harte.

It was ten years before this, in 1868, that Bret Harte's "The Luck of Roaring Camp" had appeared in The Overland Monthly, and the publishers of The Atlantic had at once asked Harte for a contribution, later making him an offer of \$10,000 a year to write exclusively for them. For "The Luck of Roaring Camp" — that remarka-

## BRET HARTE

ble Dickens-like story of a baby born in one of the roughest and most masculine of mining quarters — marked a new era in the history of American literature. Poe had written short stories, great ones too, but he might have been French or Russian. The new California Dickens was a man who knew the world about which he was writing, knew his characters, had lived with them. And Andrew Lang said of him: “Of all the pupils of Dickens he is perhaps the only one who has continued to be himself, who has not fallen into the trick of aping his master’s mannerisms. . . . He is almost the only American humorist with sentiment.”

Harte and Noah Brooks, when *The Overland* was starting, had agreed to write a story for *The Overland*’s first number. Brooks was the only one to have his contribution ready in time, although there had been four months in which to prepare. Harte had written a poem, and while Brooks’s story has been forgotten we still remember

“Serene, indifferent of Fate,  
Thou sittest at the Western Gate,” —

Bret Harte’s tribute to San Francisco.

It was in the second number of *The Overland*, August, 1868, that “The Luck of Roaring Camp” appeared. Shall we ever forget the embarrassed

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

Kentuck looking at his finger — “he wrestled with my finger, the damned little cuss”? Sentimental, yes, but there was poetry in it. Professor Beers has written: “There was a time when Irving seemed sentimental and Cooper dramatic, yet they survive.”

When Harte accepted *The Atlantic's* offer and went to live in the East, he gave that magazine for its \$10,000 four short stories and five poems — none of the latter containing the faintest suggestion of the taking quality of “The Heathen Chinees” which had swept the country from coast to coast:

“Which I wish to remark —  
And my language is plain —  
That for ways that are dark  
And for tricks that are vain,  
The heathen Chinees is peculiar:  
Which the same I would rise to explain.”

Many of the phrases of “The Heathen Chinees” passed into the slang of the day — and even of later days, for I have just read a novel published in June, 1918, containing the sentence “and yet his musical soul was childlike and bland.” “Childlike and bland,” Harte’s characterization of the “Chinees”! It is easy to know afterwards that a poem is “taking,” yet Stedman wrote to Howells about this one soon after publication, “I don’t believe that either you or I would have printed ‘The Heathen

## BRET HARTE

Chinee,' coming from an unknown author; it is so very different from the polished level of Miss [Helen] Hunt, Mrs. Thaxter, etc. Yet it would have been a good thing to print."

In spite of the fact that Dr. Holland did not quite approve of "Truthful James" and some other of Bret Harte's creations, the conductors of Scribner's persuaded Harte to write a novel for them, and with a great flourish of the publishers' trumpets, "Gabriel Conroy," its author's first novel, began its serial course in November, 1875. Dr. Holland balanced it with his own novel, "The Story of Sevenoaks," and indeed the latter was the better of the two, for in spite of the wealth of material in "Gabriel Conroy" Bret Harte failed to make a convincing story of it. "Gabriel Conroy" has been called "at the same time the best and the worst American novel of the century." Professor Pattee, in his "History of American Literature since 1870," truly says that the kind of story that Bret Harte could write must be brief. "He who depicts the one good deed in a wicked life must of necessity use a small canvas. At one moment in his career Jack Hamlin or Mother Shipton or Sandy does a truly heroic deed, but the author must not extend his inquiries too far. To make a novel with Mother Shipton as heroine would be intolerable."

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

Here is a letter to Roswell Smith from Harte. It is undated except for "Sunday Night, 7.30":

MY DEAR MR. SMITH:

I've been working at the Christmas story since I sent you that line Saturday, and have written and rewritten over 80 pp., of which all I have to show now is what I leave for you. It closes the second episode. There will be about ten pages of MS. more to complete, which I shall send you from Chicago, Tuesday night. I shall try to write at it in the cars, but at any event I have a clear day in Chicago to give it.

It has given me a vast deal of trouble, and I have written enough MS. to make four stories of the size. It is something that could not be hastily done, as the effect depended more on the treatment than the dramatic incident.

Now, if you are a man as well as a publisher, you will send your cheque for \$250 to my sister, payable to her order, to receive it on the following morning, early.

I have told my sister that you would send her the cheque. . . . I know you will send it and have faith in

Yours

BRET HARTE

The letter bears no endorsement, but I imagine the check was sent.

Bret Harte's literary partner in the early numbers of *The Overland*, Noah Brooks, was one of the group which included Charles Warren Stoddard and Mark Twain. Brooks spent the last years of his life in New York and was much in our office. He had

## NOAH BROOKS AND JOHN HAY

been sponsor for Will Carey and got him his place there — I found recently a letter from Noah Brooks to Roswell Smith, telling of an “upright, honest, steady lad” for whom he wanted to find something to do, preferably in the printer’s trade. It was Will Carey. Brooks wrote “The Boy Emigrants” and other good stories for young people, which came out first in St. Nicholas, and he wrote for The Century interesting articles on Lincoln whom he had known from 1856, and whose secretary he was to be if Lincoln’s death had not defeated a plan which Lincoln had formed for keeping Brooks near him. Probably the faithful Nicolay and Hay were to be moved up higher.

Not only did Dr. Holland disapprove of “Truthful James,” but when John Hay produced his “Pike County Ballads,” in their strong dialect of the Southwest, Dr. Holland could not bring himself to excuse their “Universalism,” as expressed probably in the famous last verse of “Jim Bludso”:

“He were n’t no saint, but at Jedgment  
I’d run my chance with Jim  
’Longside of some pious gentlemen  
That would n’t shook hands with him.  
He seen his duty — a dead sure thing —  
And went for it thar and then;  
And Christ ain’t a-goin’ to be too hard  
On a man that died for men.”



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

In Thayer's fine *Life of John Hay* he says that the idea of a thought drawn from the heroism of Jim and not merely a recital of the act was the suggestion of Whitelaw Reid, who also in the same way was responsible for the last line of "Little Breeches":

"And I think that saving a little child,  
And fatching him to his own,  
Is a derned sight better business  
Than loafing around The Throne."

While not refusing to Jim Bludso his admiration and even his "hope," Dr. Holland wrote, "for the doctrine that one virtue can compensate for the absence of another — that bigamy can be condoned by bravery, or infidelity to one's wife be atoned for by fidelity to one's business — we have only horror and disgust."

Dr. Holland took Jim Bludso very seriously.

As for dialect *Scribner's Monthly* had plenty of it, and at that time negro dialect was perhaps more welcome than that of the Pike, but later it was felt that the public was tiring of negro dialect, and Thomas Nelson Page suffered thereby. His "Marse Chan" was allowed to stand unprinted for four years. It was in such pronounced negro dialect that many words had been changed almost beyond recognition, and the editors were rather afraid of it. It finally appeared in 1884, and was one of the maga-

## THOMAS NELSON PAGE

zine's most talked-of short stories. Undoubtedly the delay kept Page back in his writing, but he never laid it up against the editors.

I remember when Page came to New York on his wedding tour, a young Richmond lawyer. It must have been soon after the appearance of "Marse Chan."

It was in the late seventies that the young genius Irwin Russell was being appreciated and encouraged by the magazine editors. His "Christmas Night in the Quarters" is unsurpassed. Russell died in 1879 at twenty-six years of age of yellow fever, which is the epidemic referred to in the following letter. Thank God, that great cause of suffering and death in the South has been removed by the healing touch of modern science. It is a discouraged letter, written the year before his death:

*Office of  
Irwin Russell  
Attorney*

*Port Gibson, Miss., Sept. 28, 1878*

Editor Scribner's Monthly,  
New York.

DEAR SIR: — You are very kind to consult me about using what is altogether your own. I shall feel complimented by your including anything of mine in your purposed volume.

My own projected book is abandoned. The epidemic, besides taking away my best friends, has utterly ruined

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

my business, and I am forced to seek employment — hoping to find a “sit” somewhere as a printer.

Very respectfully

IRWIN RUSSELL

I saw a great deal of Dr. Edward Eggleston in my early years in the magazine office. His “Hoosier Schoolmaster” had come out in 1871, and from that time until the appearance of his last novel, “The Faith Doctor,” just twenty years later, he was one of the busiest of writers and editors. The trial scene in his novel “The Graysons,” with Abraham Lincoln one of the lawyers — the famous Jack Armstrong case — is a fine example of good imaginative writing based on history.

A number of letters from Dr. Eggleston are in my files:

Please always compliment me by calling me by my name, pure and simple. When “Rev.” is at one end of a man’s name and “D.D.” at the other, it seems as though the name needed a bladder to float it.

I leave the matter of pay to you. I wanted to get back into the magazine again and to show my appreciation of the manner in which you have all treated me. And I wanted most of all to preach the sermon which I trust this story will preach to many if you like it well enough to publish it.

Once he was offended by a poor portrait of himself which appeared in the advertising pages, and

## EDWARD EGGLESTON

he told me very plainly what he thought about it. He was sorry later and wrote:

If my earnestness about that picture annoyed you, I sincerely beg your pardon. I had been stirred up by criticism of it. It is really of no consequence and I am ashamed to have shown so much worry over it. I think too much of you to want to make you uncomfortable in a matter in which you did as well as you could with your material. . . . To humbly beg your pardon, my good friend, is all that I can do.

Sincerely yours

EDWARD EGGLESTON

It was a happy life we lived. If any one hurt another's feelings he was always so sorry that we were better friends than ever when the trouble was over.

It was in August, 1883, that John Hay's "The Bread-Winners" began its brilliant serial course, and for more than twenty-five years the secret of its authorship was well kept. I think only Gilder of the office staff knew at the time who wrote it. It is the story of a struggle between Labor and Capital, with plenty of love and with characters who seem very real people, but the author is on the side of Capital, although perfectly fair to Labor, and he doubtless felt that to have it known that he was the author would be a business injury. In fact Hay stated at the time that his standing would be seri-

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

ously compromised if it were known that he had written a novel at all.

The secret of another anonymous serial has been even better kept. I may have my suspicions, but I do not know certainly to this day who wrote "The Confessions of a Wife." All dealings with the author were through a lawyer.

It was on the anniversary of Lincoln's death in 1889 that Walt Whitman came to New York and read his lecture on Lincoln at the Madison Square Theater, before one of the most distinguished audiences ever gathered to honor a literary man — James Russell Lowell, John Hay, Mark Twain, Stockton, Bunner, Saint-Gaudens, Dr. Eggleston, John Burroughs, Stedman, Gilder, and many more. Mr. Carnegie sent a check for \$350 to pay for his box — all the proceeds went to Whitman; he had come into his own at last. In looks the good, gray poet was rarely satisfying, a noble head covered with flowing gray hair and with a beard that was a part of it, his face of a healthy hue, on his well-shaped body a loosely fitting gray suit, the vest well opened, white cuffs turned back over his coat-sleeves, and a broad white turnover collar. One felt that he was of any age — that his counterpart, clad in a long robe, might have been an Old Testament prophet.

## WALT WHITMAN

As he was lame he sat in a big armchair through the lecture, which while somewhat disjointed was tenderly, beautifully delivered, with frequent stops for illustrative interpolations. There was a suggestion of Lincoln himself in the speaker, a certain calm, removed air as of one who lived in great spaces and who thought on noble things. At the end he read "O Captain! My Captain!" and we all wept together.



## CHAPTER V

*The Gudgeon Club — Frank H. Scott — Charles F. Chichester — Alexander W. Drake — Timothy Cole — George Inness and Inness, Jr. — Joseph Jefferson — F. Hopkinson Smith*

IF any one wants to get a good deal for nothing I commend the plan of the "Gudgeon Club," which was started by some of the choice spirits in our office during the eighties. I cannot remember whose idea it was, but I suspect Buel, who had a brain that often produced that which was striking and original. Four of us were dining together, happily and on some special occasion, when a member of the party suggested that we should continue the dinner yearly. Then came the great idea: it was that we should take in a new member annually, and then, all the present party having given their yearly dinners, he should be allowed to pay for the next one and that his expenditure could be absolutely unlimited; and with a new member every year we had perpetual motion. It was a great success — for a time. The spirit of emulation seized upon the new members in a very gratifying way; we had wonderful dinners, sometimes going in parlor cars (there were no automobiles in those days) to far-away points where there were famous restaurants, and spending the

## THE GUDGEON CLUB

night. Entertainments of all kinds were provided. Each man strove to outdo his predecessor and to make his feast more Lucullan than the one before. The founders, with no dues to pay and no checks to sign, had a happy time.

Of course the club went to pieces of its own weight in course of years. A dinner for six or eight was one thing, but the best dinner that a crowd of a dozen or fifteen had ever sat down to was another. It became increasingly difficult to elect new members, and the new member's name, "the gudgeon,"<sup>1</sup> became more and more significant.

Of the men in the office when I joined it, next to Roswell Smith was Frank Hall Scott, gentle, conservative, who became Mr. Smith's successor as president and for many years before that was the company's treasurer. Charles F. Chichester was the advertising manager, and I shall never forget the very beautiful circulars which he got out from time to time — always printed in black on hand-made paper, with a wide margin, an initial in red, the text forming a perfect rectangle. Type lines were filled out with ornaments — always the type was a solid mass. This has become very common since,

<sup>1</sup> GUDGEON. 1. A small European fresh-water fish, allied to the carp. It is easily caught and often used for food and for bait. . . .  
3. A person easily duped or cheated. — *Webster's Dictionary*.

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

but Chichester's circulars were the beginning of a new form of type arrangement. He was a lover of the beautiful, and soon the company began to have the benefit of his taste in the making of its books. The little "Thumb Nail Series," its leather covers stamped in gold of exquisite design, were Chichester's. The perfect type arrangement of the page of The Century Dictionary was helped by him.

On the top floor of the "old office" were the art room, and the packing-room. Up the three flights of stairs went the best artists and the best wood-engravers of the day to lay their work before Alexander W. Drake, who from the beginning until just before his death was head of the Art Department. Although it was his part to criticize, and to decline if he did not like what was offered, yet he had the friendship of every artist with whom he had to do. His criticisms always were so fair, his suggestions so helpful, his praise so quickly given when praise was due, that artists were prone to agree with him even when they had to bear their canvases away.

No man connected with the art world of New York was ever more lovingly honored than was Drake by the dinner which ten of the best and most interesting clubs gave him on his retirement from work. The menu was a pamphlet bearing full-page



ALEXANDER W. DRAKE

At a Twelfth-Night revel of the Century Club, in the guise of an itinerant Italian fortune-teller



## ALEXANDER W. DRAKE

reproductions of pictures drawn in Drake's honor by John W. Alexander, Reginald Birch, Edwin H. Blashfield, Alfred Brennan, F. S. Church, Timothy Cole, Kenyon Cox, F. V. DuMond, Charles Dana Gibson, Jules Guérin, Jay Hambidge, Oliver Herford, A. I. Keller, E. W. Kemble, Will H. Low, Maxfield Parrish, W. A. Rogers, F. Hopkinson Smith, Albert Sterner, and Irving R. Wiles; delightful pictures they were, — including Gibson's "Hats off to Drake!" — Herford's "My First Visit to Drake," the art-editor looking through a magnifying glass at the artist's offering on his desk, and the artist saying, "'What! only fifty dollars for a two-horned rhinoceros!' says I. 'That is my regular price for a one-horned rhinoceros!'" Everybody in the art world was present at the dinner, for everybody loved Drake.

His taste was phenomenal. His collections of brass, of rings, of bird-cages, of glass bottles, of models of ships, of furniture, of baskets, of samplers, have been sold from time to time and always at good prices. He knew where to buy; he was at home in the ghetto of many cities; he bought in Spain, in Algiers, in Paris, on the East Side of New York; the Russian Jew who wanted to part with his seven-branched candlestick or his samovar could find a purchaser in Drake. His gifts to his friends were



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

always unusual, always in exquisite taste, always the most interesting of the wedding presents. In his magazine work Drake had the benefit of Gilder's taste and Gilder's initiative, and, later, William Lewis Fraser came to share the burden of art directing. Mr. Smith was very diplomatic when he brought in Fraser to help Drake. There was some question as to the exact status of each, and Mr. Smith had two signs painted, "A. W. Drake, Art Superintendent," and "W. Lewis Fraser, Art Manager." That settled it.

When Scribner's Monthly began, artists drew their pictures backward upon the restricted wood block, or they were copied on it by draftsmen. Mr. Drake developed the process of photographing the original picture upon the block, thus permitting the originals to be made in any size. Engravers were encouraged to do better work, and soon America led the world in illustration. In 1880 the London Graphic, considered the best of all illustrated papers, said, "We know of no English magazine which can in any way compete with Scribner's Monthly in the matter of illustrations."

The London Saturday Review wrote at about the same time: "The impartial critic who is asked where the best wood-cuts are produced, has, we fear, but one answer possible — neither in England,

## TIMOTHY COLE

Germany, nor France, but in America." For the proof of this "reluctant admission" the Review asks "a comparison of any recent number of Scribner's Monthly and the Cornhill." The development of wood-engraving was a veritable American art renaissance. Prizes were offered, young people were encouraged to take up the art, and even when photo-engraving came in, some wood-engravers, notably Timothy Cole, Henry Wolf, Kingsley, Johnson, French, Whitney, and Juengling, went on developing their art to an extent that the modern world had never seen. Kingsley engraved his own pictures on the wood, drawing them with the graver. When the photo-engraving process began to be employed, it was Fraser who first used wood-engravers on the work of retouching the metal plates.

The greatest of all Century engravers is Timothy Cole, and for eighteen years the magazine kept him busy in Europe, engraving the masterpieces of art — Italian, Flemish, Dutch, French, Spanish, English. A set of proofs of Cole's engravings of the old masters is now of very considerable value and will become more valuable as the years go by. Timothy Cole can put into an engraving the life which no half-tone or any other mechanical process can bestow — the very soul of the picture is there. His

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

first important introduction to the public came through engraving the series of unusual and somewhat idealistic portraits of America's great literary men, Bryant, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, and others, the work of Wyatt Eaton, which Scribner's Monthly printed. The pictures were cut out and framed for many walls, and the line, "Drawn by Wyatt Eaton. Engraved by T. Cole," became familiar to thousands.

Cole himself is a simple man, of great kindliness, who has had at various times some interesting notions about food. Years ago, in the days when Horace Fletcher was just beginning to publish his theories of eating, I made some good-natured fun of them (we don't do this any more) and described the visit of guests at my house while my family was endeavoring to Fletcherize, and the impatience of the guests when they did not have enough to eat. Some friend sent my screed to Cole, then in Belgium. He took it very seriously, writing me of his great interest in all food matters and gravely informing me of a discovery which he had made — no other than that the color of the skin was affected by food. He was accustomed to eat for a long time only one kind of food, and once he went swimming with his son, who suddenly cried out, "Why, father, you're turning green." "And sure enough," wrote



**TIMOTHY COLE, ENGRAVED ON A WOOD BLOCK BY HIMSELF**

Made many years ago and in the size of a chimney tile. Used in the menu-book of the dinner in honor of Alexander W. Drake, February 25, 1913



## TIMOTHY COLE

Mr. Cole, "I looked down at my body, and observed a green tinge. 'The spinach,' I said, for I had been making my sole diet spinach for six months. 'I must change my food!'" Whereupon he ate beets and at the end of another six months found his body in a healthy, ruddy state, which he felt was largely due to the beets.

To-day Cole and his wife are living in quiet retirement on the outskirts of Poughkeepsie, overlooking the Hudson, in a two-roomed bungalow which they built to suit themselves. It has a large piazza enclosed in winter, and a cellar that would take a prize in Spotless Town. Here in the smaller of the two rooms, his studio, with a north light illuminating a small stand on which is a fixed magnifying glass, Timothy Cole does his work, engraving what he pleases, a bookplate for a friend, a bas-relief in wood, Sargent's portrait of President Wilson, a lovely wood-scene by Francis Murphy. Nor does his hand tremble — he has never smoked or used spirits, and his food is the simplest — nor is any of his marvelous natural force abated. He is a true artist, a great genius; the world has built monuments in memory of lesser men.

For the Drake dinner, just referred to, Cole contributed a wood-engraved portrait of himself and this sonnet:



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

“While busy with my burin, plying still  
A dying craft, — alas! how few are left! —  
I oft compare the present days, bereft  
Of youth’s fine ardor and of art’s just thrill,  
With days now passed to dreamland, when the will  
And power of Drake — like his who conquered Spain’s  
Armada — triumphed over lesser brains  
And raised a school of far more splendid skill.  
Drake’s magic wand called choicest spirits forth —  
Juengling and Kingsley, Wolf, French, Whitney, King.  
New life awoke, though critics all were wroth;  
Fine art prevailed and made its votaries sing.  
Yet value not those days as more than these:  
While Co(a)le gives warmth our Drake can never freeze!”

While on the subject of engraving, I may add that sometimes I have thought that it would be better never to try to illustrate a story in book or magazine, — the reader often can imagine more satisfactory people than most artists can draw, — and that the illustrations in the magazines should be confined to reproductions of pictures worth while in themselves, original or not — insets perhaps and not a necessary part of the magazine text. But we could not spare such illustrations as Howard Pyle’s for “Hugh Wynne” or his own “Men of Iron,” or Du Maurier’s for “Trilby,” or anything that Maxfield Parrish illuminates with his brush. Amusing pictures like May Wilson Preston’s or Peter Newell’s or Gruger’s or Henry Raleigh’s often add to

## GEORGE INNESS

our pleasure in reading light stories—nevertheless, I think that the average story is better unillustrated.

When I was a boy I knew of writers for the weeklies and monthlies of that day, Gleason's Literary Companion, Godey's Lady's Book, etc., whose editors used to send them a batch of proofs of English and other foreign pictures, bought cheap, that they might get ideas for their stories from the pictures, which later would be used to illustrate the stories—and be sure to fit.

It was in the early eighties that George Inness was invited by the Boston Art Club to make an exhibition of such of his works as he could gather together in the galleries of the club—the first time, I think, that Mr. Inness's paintings were shown *en masse* to the public. Roswell Smith, whose only daughter had a few years before married Inness's only son, and who was most appreciative of the genius of his new connection, was desirous of having this exhibition a great success. He suggested that George, Jr., and I should go to Boston for a fortnight in advance and help it along. "You, William," he said to me, "know the public and ways of reaching them, and George knows the artists in Boston. Go ahead and help to make that exhibition appreciated."

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

George and I went to Boston, where, being much entertained by newspaper men and others, it seemed to us that nearly every man in the city spent the greater part of the afternoon at Young's, beginning with oysters at one o'clock and concluding with coffee between three and four. Evenings too were given largely to the consumption of food. When the Saturday night of the reception came "everybody" in Boston was at the Art Club, and many had come from far away, including a few notable critics from New York. The exhibition was a distinct success, and in that gallery it first dawned upon the public that the poet-painter Inness was the greatest master of his art that America had seen. From that day his pictures, which had seldom brought him in \$1000, began to realize higher prices, from which, fortunately, he was able to benefit in his lifetime. Since his death as much as \$45,000 has been paid for a fine Inness — and it is not likely that the limit has been reached.

Mr. Inness went to Boston after the rooms opened, and I was fortunate enough to be with him one afternoon when he made a call on his friend and contemporary, George Fuller. Each man greatly admired the work of the other. In the course of their talk Mr. Inness painted in mid-air with his thumb a picture which had just come into his mind.

## GEORGE INNESS, JR.

I can see him now, quickly taking off his overcoat, crouching a little, then drawing a long, straight horizon line — a group of trees here on the left (he sketched in the trees) — over at the right, on the horizon, a distant railway train. Then (one eye shut and his nose twisted) a vertical column of black smoke rising straight against a gray cloud. The picture was there before us, and might almost have been taken away and framed. He did paint it, and I think he used the idea several times, but I am confident that Mr. Fuller and I were the first to see it.

A few years later George, Jr., and I went to Europe together. He had been born and bred there, but I was a young American seeing the Old World for the first time. He made a splendid companion, full of reminiscences and good talk, but he could not endure my acting as if I had never seen it all before. If I stopped and gazed, he began to shy; if I followed this by taking a red guide-book out of my pocket, he fled.

Places did not interest him in the same way they interested me. On the steamer going over he said: "Let's surely go to Perugia."

"Of course," I answered, "and to Assisi, close by, where St. Francis —"

"Never mind about St. Francis. There is a café

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

in Perugia where they have the very best coffee in all Europe."

And they had — and it was twenty-five years later before I got to Assisi.

At Rome we enjoyed the artists, Caryl Coleman, Elihu Vedder, and their fellow-workers. We ate at queer "trattorias" and drank chianti, and every night were characters in "La Bohème." Vedder was working on his illustrations for the "Rubaiyat," and as I was much in his studio and he full of the subject, the beauty and power of Fitzgerald's rendering of Omar's lines took deep hold on me.

George spoke Italian well, and that greatly added to our comfort — though in one case it detracted from mine. As we were leaving Pompeii, the guides, who were not allowed to receive fees, made a dead set at George, the converser, inviting him into their house to see the pictures which they could sell. "Ah, no," he whispered in Italian (as I learned afterward), with much lifting of his eyebrows and many shrugs, "I am but a poor artist. Here, now, — with me is a very wealthy signor, a most generous and noble man. Invite him."

George hurried on, leaving me defenseless, and a horde of guides pressed me into the house.

"An album, signor — ev-very picture of Pompeii — only one thousand lire."

## GEORGE INNESS, JR.

“No? This one, then — see — five hundred lire. Ah, beau-ti-ful — it will leeve forever.”

I tried to run, but first the signor should see them all — two hundred, one hundred lire. Finally I got away, spending a few lire and losing two buttons off my coat.

When we reached Germany on the way home, my companion said:

“Now, Will, you can do the talking.”

I knew very little German, but I tried some of it on the first man I met, the porter who carried our bags upstairs.

“Um wie viel uhr table d’hote?”

“Half-past foive, sorr.”

One can get on very well in Europe with a mere smattering of foreign languages — and English.

The best friend I ever had in the acting profession was Joseph Jefferson, whose “Autobiography” was one of two famous books produced at about the same time, both of them needing no editorial revision. The other was Grant’s “Memoirs.” Gilder knew that Jefferson was writing the story of his life, and he tried for years to get it. Twice I made a journey to “Jefferson Island,” his Louisiana plantation, with the same object, but it was hard to convince Jefferson that The Century was the proper place to



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

print his story. He had an idea that he wanted it first published as a subscription book, with a nice leather back and a gilt top, and men going around to talk about it. I remember his blowing the dust off an imaginary gilt top when he spoke of this to me one day.

To reach "Jefferson Island" one traveled by rail for four hours southwest from New Orleans, and then drove for ten miles over a flat prairie. "Avery's Island," a tall mesa with a famous salt mine inside it, loomed up in the distance. And here at "Avery's Island," Mr. McIlhenny, of the Avery family, put up his famous "Tabasco Sauce" beloved by gourmands the world around. Mr. Jefferson called his place "Orange Island," but every one else called it after him. It was an island in name only, although one crossed a bridge over a small stream to reach it. The house was a great hospitable Southern home, one-story, with verandas on three sides. I have never forgotten the pleasant custom of having a colored man bring black coffee before we were up.

Those were great days on the veranda at Jefferson's plantation. He would read aloud from the manuscript, lean back, put his spectacles up on his forehead, and tell a story, and I would say, "Why don't you put that in?"



JOSEPH JEFFERSON AND HIS YOUNGEST BOY

From a photograph made by W. W. Ellsworth at Mr. Jefferson's home in  
Louisiana in 1889



## JOSEPH JEFFERSON

“No — you don’t think they would like that, do you?”

I did, and in it would go.

In my file there is a letter from Jefferson to Roswell Smith about the “Autobiography,” written from Hohokus, New Jersey, May 16, 1888. After expressing his gratification that the office, and especially Gilder, liked the book and considered it magazineable, he continued:

I did not write my Autobiography with a view to serial publication. It is somewhat dramatic in its form and my theatrical experience has taught me that long waits between the acts weaken the interest, and I have expressed to Mr. Gilder my fears as to this result in the case of my book.

He does not agree with me on this point, and as I have faith in his judgment, I am willing to waive the consideration, if we can reconcile one or two other matters that now stand in the way, to our mutual satisfaction.

In the first place, I do not desire that my book shall be brought out till the International Copyright law, now so near its enactment, shall have passed, otherwise I should lose the benefit of the English and Australian markets. The terms you offer as I remember, \$10,000, while I do not reflect on their liberality, are however lower than I could entertain. I should consider \$20,000 the least I would accept for the serial publication you speak of.

It is quite likely that my work is not worth this to the magazine, but I have to consider that as everybody

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

reads *The Century*, the novelty and freshness of my work would be weakened for future publication.

I fully appreciate the value of an endorsement such as your magazine would give, but after that I could not hope to rekindle any enthusiasm by the re-publication of it. Should you desire to entertain the sum I have named as the price, I will be most pleased to meet and arrange with you for the publication.

Thanking you for your pleasant note and your consideration, I am

Faithfully yours

J. JEFFERSON

Mr. Jefferson's fears were removed as to there being no sale for a serial when issued in book form; there was a compromise in the price, and he was never sorry that he let the "Autobiography" appear first in a literary magazine, for it gave him a literary clientèle and brought him a college degree and much appreciation.

He was asked frequently to speak in colleges, and he loved to do it. My eldest daughter was at Smith College when Jefferson was playing for a night at Springfield, Massachusetts, near by. He telegraphed her saying that he would be glad to speak to the girls of Smith at twelve o'clock the next noon. The telegram was taken to President Seelye in some trepidation — to suggest a college speaker seemed a serious matter to the student. But the President said, "Why, surely, telegraph

## JOSEPH JEFFERSON

him at once to come." And he came. The chapel was packed to the window-sills, and Mr. Jefferson had his usual good time, talking and giving unbounded pleasure to a thousand girls. After the generous applause which was sure to greet him, he would begin with "An actor who makes speeches certainly likes applause, and for two reasons; first, because he enjoys appreciation, and, second, because it gives him a chance to think what he is going to say next." Then there would be more applause, and he would go happily on.

He was particularly clever at answering questions, and when he was to make a speech and feared that he would run out of ideas, he would ask to have some questions distributed among the people near. This was done at a dinner we gave him at the Aldine Club, but he had not counted on the ideas which would come to him from the introducer. Hamilton W. Mabie was in the chair, and Mabie always took pains to know something about the man he introduced, and frequently he gave the speaker a better idea for a speech than the one he had in his head. Thanks to Mabie, Aldine after-dinner speeches were always good.

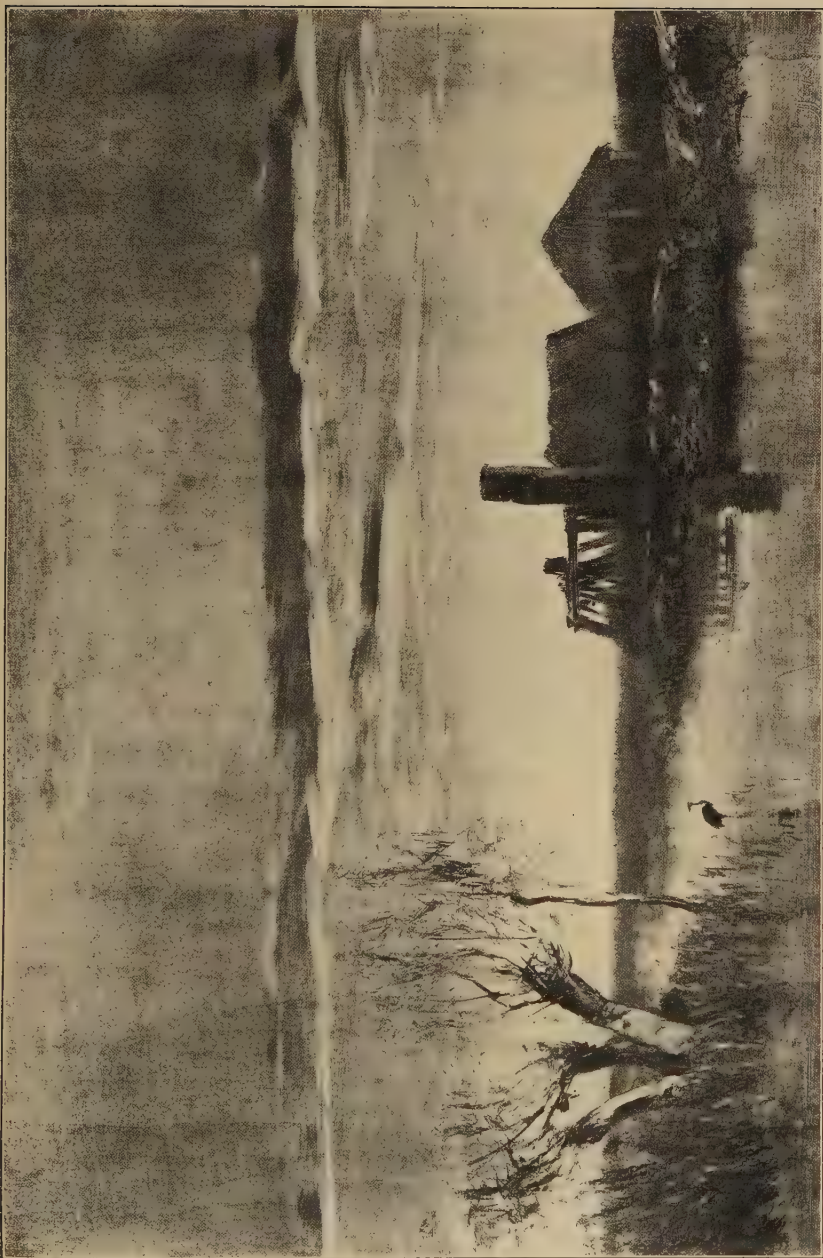
That night Mabie had prepared himself by reading Winter's book on the Jefferson family — four generations of them had been actors, and at The



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

Players there hangs a faded playbill of Drury Lane, with Jefferson's grandfather cast as the ghost to David Garrick's Hamlet — and Mabie's introductory speech was of the older Jeffersons and Mrs. Siddons. On that subject our guest knew more than Mabie — as Mabie was well aware — and he talked for an hour, talked as I had never heard him talk before, of his father, his grandfather, with family legends of David Garrick, Kemble, Charlotte Cushman — it was one of the events of our lives. No questions were needed that night.

Jefferson generally ended his spring season with a Saturday night in Yonkers, and once he spent a Sunday there with me. "I want you to come to Niblo's Garden to-morrow afternoon," he said, "and bring the whole family. I have hired the theater, kept my company together, and we are going to play 'Rip Van Winkle' for the blind and deaf children in the New York City institutions. It will be a great occasion to me, for I have always wanted to try my acting on the blind and the deaf, to see whether the deaf would get enough from what they saw and the blind from what they heard." So we went to Niblo's Garden Monday afternoon. Entering by the stage door we were shown into one of the boxes; the others were occupied by the Clevelands, the Gilders, and Mrs. Jefferson; the house



A MONOTYPE BY JOSEPH JEFFERSON



## JOSEPH JEFFERSON

was rather dark, but looking around we could see that it was packed with boys and girls: blue uniforms here, white collars over there. Presently there came a note from Mr. Jefferson: "The experiment is a failure; the Charity Commissioners thought I must have made a mistake in inviting the blind and the deaf, and they have sent an audience without a thing the matter with them." And it was not a very appreciative audience either; charity children are usually afraid to show their pleasure.

Mr. Jefferson believed that if he had not been an actor, he would have been a painter, and, perhaps, "would have succeeded better." He loved to depict Southern scenes — the slumbering bayou, or the deep forest with its great tree-trunks and drooping moss. He was one of the few to make "monotypes" — sketches done in sepia and lard on a zinc plate, from which a single impression is printed on absorbent paper. I have a "monotype" of his, about twenty-four by sixteen inches in size, representing the ruins of a sugar-mill, which Mr. Jefferson painted in twenty minutes. He gave me, too, a painted tapestry-like hanging, the work of his brush, about eight feet high by five feet wide, depicting a red flamingo under a green-leaved palmetto.

The last letter I ever had from Mr. Jefferson was

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

written from Palm Beach, Florida, December 11, 1903. He died there April 23, 1905. It was largely about business matters, but it closed with this:

Give my cordial regards to your dear family all of whom I so well remember. It only seems the other day that I enjoyed your hospitality. I fancy by this time that those little ones are all grown-ups and that you are several grandfathers. How time goes on, so heedless of us all. What a short-lived creature is man (myself excepted, by-the-by, 75 next birthday)! In a few years we shall be sweet little angels, wings and all, and as the old gambler said on his death bed, "If we meet I'll fly you for \$5." Till then,

Sincerely yours

J. JEFFERSON

Gilder encouraged a number of authors besides Jefferson, and one, Hopkinson Smith, he actually started on his career. Smith was a great storyteller, and Gilder asked him to make a record of his stories for *The Century*, with the result that Hopkinson Smith produced "Colonel Carter of Cartersville," planning it simply as a vehicle for the colored servant Chad to tell his stories, but when it was done the stories were subordinate to the charming record of the Virginia gentleman, "Colonel Caarter," in New York.

One day Smith came into my office saying, "Ellsworth, how do you think my stories would go on the stage? Why should n't I give readings, and how do you get started?" I took him into Major Pond's



What a short lived creature  
is man (myself excepted by  
the bye. 75 next birth day) in  
a few years we shall be  
sweet little angels. wings  
and all. and as the old  
Gambler said on his death bed  
"if we meet I'll fly you for  
\$5." till then  
Sincerely yours

Jefferson

LAST PARAGRAPH OF A LETTER FROM JOSEPH JEFFERSON  
WRITTEN AT PALM BEACH, FLORIDA, DECEMBER 11, 1903





## F. HOPKINSON SMITH

office, next door, in the Everett House, and he was soon as great a success at entertaining the public as he had been at engineering and writing and painting. I think it was as a painter, perhaps, that he took the most pleasure. His vacations, for twenty-seven consecutive summers, were spent in Venice painting — and if a man can go where he wants to go and do what he wants to do for three months and then sell the product for some thousands of dollars, I can't imagine anything much better this side of Paradise.

The world does n't seem quite the same world without Hopkinson Smith. No one could be more alive. I can see him as he was at a Twelfth Night revel of the Century Club. He came as the German Emperor — it was years before the war — clad in a snow-white uniform, with a brass helmet, and his long mustaches having an upward turn. He went about with a box of decorations, pinning one on nearly every breast. I was decorated because, as he said, I had drunk two glasses of beer when one would have sufficed. Later in the evening he was called upon for a speech, and he delivered one that was prophetic: "I am a man of peace," he said; "I want a piece of Morocco; I want a piece of China; I want a piece of every country that I have not the whole of alretty."

## CHAPTER VI

*St. Nicholas — Mary Mapes Dodge — Rudyard Kipling — Kate Douglas Wiggin — Jack London*

To have been associated in the issuing of *St. Nicholas* has been one of the pleasures of my life. Roswell Smith, who was not long satisfied with publishing one magazine, believed there was room for a new children's periodical, one which should give more and better pictures, with text that children surely would like — every bit of it. In *Scribner's Monthly* for July, 1873, — the same number that began "The Great South" papers, and contained an installment of Dr. Holland's novel, "Arthur Bonnicastle," and an illustrated article (which would be timely to-day) on "Low Life in Berlin," — there was an anonymous article on "Children's Magazines." It was written by Mary Mapes Dodge, who was to be the editor of the new venture. She said: "We edit for the approval of fathers and mothers, and endeavor to make the child's monthly a milk-and-water variety of the adult's periodical. But in fact the child's magazine needs to be stronger, truer, bolder, more uncompromising than the other. Its cheer must be the cheer of the bird-song, not of

## MARY MAPES DODGE

condescending editorial babble. . . . If now and then the situation have fun in it, if something tumble unexpectedly, if the child-mind is surprised into an electric recognition of comical incongruity, so that there is a reciprocal 'ha, ha!' between the printed page and the little reader, well and good. . . . Let there be no sermonizing either, no wearisome spinning out of facts, no rattling of the dry bones of history. . . . Doubtless a great deal of instruction and good moral teaching may be inculcated in the pages of a magazine; but it must be by hints dropped incidentally here and there; by a few brisk, hearty statements of the difference between right and wrong; a sharp, clean thrust at falsehood, a sunny recognition of truth, a precious application of politeness. The ideal child's magazine is a pleasure-ground."

Later Mrs. Dodge wrote on "Seeing the World," in which she suggested that seeing the world meant seeing the good there was in it, and not necessarily the bad. Her ideas on the subject of children's reading were always sane and practical, and she had the happy faculty of suggesting, creating, obtaining the contributions she wanted from just the people she wanted to write. She was able to persuade many of the great writers of the world to contribute to her children's magazine — Tennyson, Longfellow, Bry-

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

ant, Holmes, Bret Harte, John Hay, "Ik Marvel," Charles Dudley Warner, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and scores of others. One day Kipling told her a story of the Indian jungle, and Mrs. Dodge asked him to write it down for St. Nicholas. He never had written for children, but he would try. The result was "The Jungle Book."

I remember Kipling the first time he came into our office and as he sat with one leg under him, swinging the other, and peering out at us through large gold-rimmed spectacles, he seemed like a being out of another world — the world of "The Phantom Rickshaw" and "The Man Who Would Be King." I can't remember ever being really intimidated by an author except Kipling.

In the days just before St. Nicholas, there was much in the air about the results of bad reading, especially dime-novel reading, for boys. James T. Fields in his "Biographical Notes" wrote: "I have for a long time been of the opinion that the increase of crime is largely owing to the reading of immoral and exciting cheap books. Traveling about the country I see young people everywhere absorbed in reading, to say the least, a doubtful class of literature. On the railroads I see schoolboys secluding themselves from observation, busily occupied in reading 'Dime Novels' as they are called. If I go into the

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S READING

engine or baggage department, I always find one or two workmen off duty earnestly devouring the Police Gazette or other illustrated journals devoted to crime. . . . I found the advertisements of low theaters in all our cities, holding out cheap inducements to crowd the pit and gallery when —— played 'Jack Sheppard' and made robbery heroic. 'Escaped from Sing Sing' is crowding the Howard Athenæum, based on the easy immunity from the punishment of crime."

Mr. Fields visited a notorious boy criminal under sentence of death, and found that dime novels had been his chief reading. The boy thought he had read at least sixty, most of them stories of killing and scalping Indians, and running away with women.

It is worth while to quote this that we may appreciate how much better are the conditions that surround young people to-day. Many of them are buying The Saturday Evening Post (at half the price of the old dime novel) and other inexpensive but usually clean magazines. Instead of going to "low theaters," they pay five and ten cents for the "movies" and seldom get harm thereby. All this has come about within the memory of people not very old, and perhaps the influence of St. Nicholas on the children of a past generation is making the



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

grown-ups of the present day a little more thoughtful of what they place before the children of their own time.

Here in this bottomless pile of old letters, which I have been saving for years, is one from Frank Stockton to Roswell Smith written June 6, 1873. The first number of *St. Nicholas* would appear in November; Mrs. Dodge was taking a short vacation in Europe preparatory to the work which would come on her, and Stockton, as assistant editor, had sent out circulars to authors asking them to contribute. This was his report to the publisher:

“*Thos. B. Aldrich* is cordially disposed and will probably write for us when he finishes certain work which he has on hand.

“*Thos. W. Higginson* is so busy that he cannot make any engagements at present.

“*Horatio Alger, Jr.*, finds that his contract with another periodical will not allow him to write for us.

“*John Burroughs* will try to write something in the way of Natural History sketches, as soon as he has a little leisure and has seen a specimen of the magazine.”

And there were others — Rose Terry Cooke, Sarah Orne Jewett, Margaret Eyttinge. “My temporary MSS. book,” continued Stockton, “has

## ST. NICHOLAS

now twenty-two entries and all the MSS. (but three, just received) have been read and disposed of. In regard to two I shall confer with Mrs. Dodge before taking final action. This is, I believe, all I have to report from the American division of St. Nicholas editorial department."

From a publisher's point of view there is one drawback in publishing St. Nicholas and it holds with all young people's periodicals; readers grow out of it; difficulty in keeping up the circulation finally decided the Harpers to give up their Harper's Young People, and perhaps the same cause made it easy for St. Nicholas, in its early days, to absorb half a dozen children's magazines, including Our Young Folks — of blessed memory. The Little Corporal was another magazine that was merged in St. Nicholas. The average life of a St. Nicholas subscription is only three years, and that means that one third of the subscribers are replaced every year, and, to make a gain, even more subscribers are added. Its own back volumes are so attractive that they militate against it; a number of old volumes in the house may keep a family from subscribing. People will go on for decades taking The Century or The Atlantic, but not St. Nicholas. The conductors of The Youth's Companion have tried to counteract this natural falling-off by printing

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

much that appeals to the whole family, and in a paper made up like *The Youth's Companion* an editor can slip in an article for grandpa and there is no harm — but every item in the *St. Nicholas* contents counts; it is strictly for young people, and there does not seem to be any room for the grown-ups of the family.

Mrs. Dodge lived to conduct *St. Nicholas* for more than thirty years, and in all that time William Fayal Clarke, who is now the editor, worked at her side. She did a great deal more than that; she wrote that classic of Holland, "Hans Brinker, or The Silver Skates"; she wrote "Donald and Dorothy," "The Land of Pluck," and several volumes of poems. Her rhymes and jingles for children are always in the right spirit, and often her poetry strikes a deeper note, as in "The Two Mysteries":

"We know not what it is, dear, this sleep so deep and still,  
The folded hands, the awful calm, the cheek so pale and chill,  
The lids that will not lift again, though we may call and call,  
The strange white solitude of peace that settles over all."

She was always cheerful and ready with repartee and amusing comments. I recall a poster exhibition when Maxfield Parrish's "Indian Boy" was shown for the first time, a brown, nude figure, sitting in deep, green grass. Mrs. Dodge thought it was the figure of a girl, but Mr. Parrish told her no, it was

## ST. NICHOLAS

a boy. "Well," said Mrs. Dodge, "I call it a young boy just bursting into womanhood."

If one picks up the first volume of St. Nicholas with its cover of red and gold — a happy blending that has never been changed — he will find even then a well-nigh perfect magazine. In the very first number, Frank Stockton began a serial story, "What Might Have Been Expected"; Donald G. Mitchell told of the writing of the "Arabian Nights"; Lucretia P. Hale contributed a dear little article on "Anna's Doll"; and Celia Thaxter a poem "Under the Light-House." There was much beside, including an article by "J. S. Stacy," sometimes called "Joel Stacy" — which it will do no harm to say now was one of the names under which Mrs. Dodge wrote (and often her contributions were the best things in a number), and the department "For Little Folks" was begun and there was the very first "Jack-in-the-Pulpit." It opened: "My name is Jack. I am a green thing coming up as a flower, yet I know a great deal. For why? The birds come and tell me." And for years "Jack-in-the-Pulpit" went on his happy way, telling all sorts of wise and strange things, teaching every month — but no pupil ever had a suspicion that it was teaching! A department, the "St. Nicholas League," which was conducted by Albert Bigelow

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

Paine from 1899 to 1908 (and is still going on), is responsible for the production of several writers. Margaret Widdemer, who was one of two to gain the Pulitzer prize for the best volumes of poetry published in the year ending June, 1919, began in the "League," and it is responsible for starting a number of illustrators.

The first volume that was mine to push and write about was the one beginning with November, 1878, and how well I remember the serials of that year and how I read them in manuscript and so primed myself to attract more readers. One of them was "Eyebright," by Susan Coolidge; another, "A Jolly Fellowship," by Stockton; a third, "Half a Dozen Housekeepers," complete in three numbers, by an author whose name is now a "household word," but then fate had concealed her by naming her Katharine D. Smith. While she was a kindergarten teacher in San Francisco, she married Samuel B. Wiggin, of Boston and Hartford — a good friend of mine while we were young men together in Hartford. He had an airy manner; he hunched up his shoulders, and had a habit of starting an inquiry with, "Did ever you see?" or "Did ever you know?" At Dartmouth he was known as "Samuel B. Wiggin, from *Bos-ton*, by G——."

A well-known reference book says that this lady



## KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

“organized the first free kindergarten on the Pacific Coast.” To help its coffers she wrote and printed, one Christmas, a little book called “The Birds’ Christmas Carol.” A member of the Houghton Mifflin Company saw it, asked and received permission to reprint it in a larger way, and so that lucky house began to bring out the works of Kate Douglas Wiggin, the first one, the little kindergarten stranger, having a phenomenal sale; and everything that she has written since has been successful — each book bringing her a little closer to a vast army of readers and making her just a little dearer to them.

It has been interesting to find out since the death of Jack London that St. Nicholas had a hand in making a man of him — and so perhaps a writer. As a boy he grew up a wharf rat on San Francisco Bay, a boy pirate, cruising about with dare-devil comrades, taking junk which did not belong to them, “flotsam and jetsam” they called it, and sometimes “finders keepers, losers weepers” was their loose code. There is an article in St. Nicholas for July, 1917, telling the story — how Jack wandered into the Oakland Public Library one Saturday afternoon, and opening a bound volume of St. Nicholas containing the number for November, 1884, his eye



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

fell on a story, fitted, he felt, to his own life. It was "The Cruise of the Pirate Ship Moonraker," written by Mr. F. Marshall White, the story of a boy who fell under the evil influence of trashy, juvenile fiction which led him to run away from a good home. Becoming the leader of a gang of "wharf rats," he cruised about New York harbor on a captured yacht. This he renamed the "Moonraker," and, as its captain, he styled himself "The Boy Terror." After the boys had enjoyed some semi-piratical adventures, the "Moonraker" was overhauled by a police patrol tug, on board of which was "The Boy Terror's" father, who punished him effectively and in an old-fashioned way, without any regard to the fact that his son's band was present to witness their leader's humiliation.

This story awoke in Jack London the consciousness that what had happened to the Moonraker's captain might some day happen to him and land him in the penitentiary. He threw over his old life and entered the service of the State as a juvenile member of the Fish Patrol. He knew all the tricks of the harbor thieves and he cruised about the bay, swooping down on oyster poachers, the desperate Greeks and Sicilian knife-wielders, the lawless Chinese, who, when cornered, would put up a treacherous fight. And Jack enjoyed this life just as much

## JACK LONDON

as he had enjoyed the other, and he carried a clearer conscience. Before long he began to write "Stories of the Fish Patrol." Then he sent to St. Nicholas his novelette, "The Cruise of the Dazzler," which, after serializing, we made into a successful book. The writing of it led to his doing later that powerful story which The Century serialized, "The Sea Wolf."

I wish I had kept a hundred interesting letters that I have had from authors, but this one, a live, typical letter from London, I did happen to preserve:

Besides the stone house I am building for myself, I am at the present time building three other houses, one in the hills back of Oakland for my first wife and the children, one on the ranch here for my sister, who is my ranch superintendent and a very capable and practical business woman, and one in a remote outlying part of the ranch which will become an immediate asset, because I shall rent it for from \$50 to \$60 per month to persons who want a rural vacation on the ranch.

Perhaps, unfortunately, I was born with a surplus of energy. In addition to the steady output of fiction now planned, I have also planned two other volumes, of personal reminiscences. Each of these shall be written as soon as I can get around to it, and each of them will merit a sequel. The first book is my personal reminiscences as a writer, from the very beginning of the game, when I started to educate myself, up to the present moment. Very similar in a way, although entirely

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

different in treatment from the "John Barleycorn" reminiscences. The other will constitute the nine years of preliminary farming and my present experiments which I am carrying on here at Glen Ellen.

Please be sure to get the right line on me. I am fearfully and abominably energetic. I keep half a dozen persons working overtime, handling the work I map out and turn over to them. They get insomnia trying to do their respective shares, while I sleep like a baby. And I do my daily writing (and reading) with which they have nothing to do, in addition to cutting out their work for them. If I live to be five hundred years old I should never be able to do the work I have already mapped out and filed away. I have the plots of over one hundred novels filed away on my shelves and possibly five hundred short stories.

If you should want to look at the first 40,000 words of the sea-novel I am writing, say the word and I shall immediately forward the manuscript to you. In the meantime, please do not fail me on the first advance of \$1000 in March.

And that busy life was ended at forty! The first time I ever saw London he was the principal speaker at a meeting of Socialists in Oakland, California. He had just been on a lecture tour in the East, and they had met to do him honor. He told them the story of his trip. "I had to give literary lectures, you know," he said, "but whenever I had the chance I gave them the 'Red Revolution' [his lecture on socialism]. One Sunday I was asked to speak at a certain Western State university. The

## JACK LONDON

president called for me and escorted me to the chapel. I mounted the pulpit. Before me was a Bible, and the meeting was opened with prayer [murmurs from the audience]; I arose to speak, and although I knew that in such surroundings another kind of speech might be more appropriate, I gave them the 'Red Revolution.'" [Shouts of joy from the Socialists.]

A little old lady sat next to the friend who brought me and he whispered to me, "This is Jack London's mother; would you like to know her?"

"Indeed, I would."

And while I was in Oakland I went to see her several times, and found her a most delightful old lady who, as she said herself, believed in virtually everything — including astrology, palmistry, and spiritualism. She told me that her husband was the originator of the Greenback movement, and much that was unusual in Jack's ideas of life may be accounted for by heredity.

In Russia, where they have known for years Poe, Mrs. Stowe, Mark Twain, and Walt Whitman, Jack London is to-day the most popular American author. With no international copyright arrangement between Russia and the United States, publishers of that country have been free to help themselves to American material, and it is said that a

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

dozen of them translated and published Jack London's books as fast as they appeared.

As London grew older and made money from his writings, his wants increased. His place at Glen Ellen was a great money-absorber, and his publishers were asked with growing frequency to make advances from future royalties for one purpose and another. A hundred thousand eucalyptus trees were set out, with a pay-roll of \$2000 a month while the work was going on. They all died. A roof of Spanish tile for his new house would cost \$3500, and must be paid for (the house was burned later). A fine stud horse was needed for the farm, price \$2500. Gradually we grew apart; the stud horse was the end.

## CHAPTER VII

*English publishers — The great Boston group of authors — Richard Henry Dana and "Two Years Before the Mast" — Literary agents — James T. Fields — John B. Gough — Dryden and his publisher — The Civil War and literature — The Centennial — Sidney Lanier — John Burroughs — John Muir — Thoreau — Ernest Thompson Seton — Margaret Deland — Henry James — Robert Browning — Edmund Gosse — Charles Waldstein — H. G. Wells — George Moore — Chesterton*

OUR American publishing houses are not often very old — two generations or three at the most. I once asked the American manager of a well-known English house if any of the original members of the firm were still living. "Well, no," he said, "they are n't exactly what you would call alive. You see our house was founded in 1724." Five years before Benjamin Franklin started up the press of the Pennsylvania Gazette! Perhaps some of those Englishmen are lineal descendants of the very first publishers, who were undertakers, Egyptian undertakers, privileged to get up a book about the men they buried; "The Book of the Dead" it was, a famous title in its day. The deceased took one copy; he had to, he was dead; and the publisher supplied duplicates to as many of the family and friends as he could persuade to subscribe. I can almost see his



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circular: "We have on hand a few slightly worn copies [a favorite term with some publishers] of 'The Book of the Dead of Ptah-Hotep' — a remarkably vivid account of the life and works of the deceased. Sign the coupon in the margin and send at once. Do not delay; on account of the Assyrian war papyrus is going up."

Although New York and Philadelphia held greater publishing houses, the group of American authors who made their home in or near Boston (by common consent, as Bliss Perry says in his *Life of Whitman*, "no new name has been adjudged worthy to stand with them"), published their books in their home city. And this was said to have some connection with the treatment of Richard Henry Dana, Jr., by a New York house. Dana was a long time seeking a publisher for his "Two Years Before the Mast," and a New York firm, after declining it once, finally offered \$250 for the copyright and bought it outright. The book, issued in 1840, was a great success, but the New York publishers are said never to have paid Mr. Dana anything more. The result was that word was passed around Boston to beware of New York publishers, and so the great authors of that region brought out their books in Boston. The New York firm was technically right, and at that time it was not un-

## ENGLISH PUBLISHERS

usual to buy a book outright and pay nothing more to an author under any circumstances. Fielding was glad to sell "Tom Jones" for £600 and he thought he was driving a bargain, for another publisher had declined it at Fielding's own price of £25. Andrew Millar, the fortunate purchaser, cleared £18,000 from "Tom Jones" before he died. A year after publication he paid Fielding another hundred pounds, but that was all. Mr. Morgan has often paid for an autograph manuscript many times more than the author received for all rights. I noted recently the sale for \$250 of an autograph letter of Stevenson to his mother telling her that he had received only £20 for all rights in "Virginibus Puerisque." The letter, telling his mother about it, when Stevenson became famous, brought two and a half times as much as the copyright on the book!

In our day it is not customary to buy manuscripts outright; the author receives a royalty of from ten to twenty per cent on the retail price of the book and often gets a large amount in advance, either on acceptance of the manuscript or upon issue. It is not unusual to pay \$5000 or \$10,000 in advance on a book which the publisher is quite sure will earn that amount for the author on the day it is published; and sometimes, owing to the compe-

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

tition brought about usually by literary agents, when the publisher is not at all sure that it will earn what he is virtually forced to pay. Advance payment is a gamble which makes publishing much more uncertain than it used to be. The author says: "Here, I have spent a year on this book, now, you, sir publisher, are a kind of banker — at any rate, I consider you one — and I will thank you to advance me some money, not because my book has earned it but because I need it."

The literary agent has his uses, and in these days of serial rights, dramatic rights, moving-picture rights, and second serial rights, perhaps the literary agent is inevitable. In a page of his "Autobiography" Sir Walter Besant expressed his gratitude to the dean of literary agents, A. P. Watt of London (now deceased), who with his son represented Kipling, Hichens, Conan Doyle, Gilbert Parker, and many other authors. "By their watch and ward," wrote Sir Walter, "my interests have been carefully guarded for eighteen years. During that time I have always been engaged for the three years in advance; I have been relieved from every kind of pecuniary embarrassment, my income has been multiplied by three at least; and I have had, through them, the offer of a great deal more work than I could undertake." But there are many

## JAMES T. FIELDS

authors whose income would not be increased at all by dealing with literary agents — authors who have one publisher whom they believe in and who believes in them.

The literary agent has done away with much of the close friendship that was wont to exist between author and publisher. One realizes this in reading of the affectionate relation of men like James T. Fields with the authors they published. I think I owe to Fields some of my interest in books and publishing, for when I was a boy he gave a series of lectures in Hartford which I attended and which made an unusual impression on my youthful mind. Fields had lectures on Milton, Scott, and many other literary lights, and helpful talks on the "Importance of Reading" and one on "Cheerfulness," in which he spoke of the good done the world by pleasant people and of a gravestone in a New England cemetery bearing, with name and age, the line "She was so pleasant!"<sup>1</sup> "Think," he said, "what a delightful character she must have been to have an epitaph like that! One can almost see a choir of nightingales perched upon her grave and hear their melodious chanting to her memory."

After listening to James T. Fields, it seemed to

<sup>1</sup> On a stone at East Brookfield, Vermont, is the line: "She was very pleasant." This is probably the epitaph which Mr. Fields had in mind.

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

me that to have to do with books was about the best occupation in the world, and my forty years of it has convinced me that it is. But Fields used to say that he would rather be a fine tenor singer than anything else.

When I was a young man the era of lyceum lectures had just passed, although I heard Wendell Phillips, Gough, and a few others. I shall never forget Gough's lecture on temperance, one hot spring night in Allyn Hall, Hartford. While the audience gasped for breath, Gough held up a glass of water, with the ice tinkling in it, and made a wonderful apostrophe to water — water, clear and cold, water out of the running brook, water out of the deep well; tinkle, tinkle, — and we nearly died of thirst. It made such an impression upon me that although I have lectured many hundred times, I have never drunk a glass of water before an audience, nor permitted a pitcher to be in sight if I could help it.

In my own publishing experience I cannot remember that we ever bought a book outright, and I feel sure that if we had and if the book had been more successful than we expected, the author would have received a share of the extra profits. When General Grant wrote his war articles for *The Century*, he was to be paid five hundred dollars each for the four, — a good price in those days and



## DRYDEN AND HIS PUBLISHER

a very small price to-day, — but they were so successful in increasing the circulation of the magazine, that Mr. Roswell Smith sent General Grant a check for \$2000 over the payment agreed on. In my experience publishers have been pretty good sort of people, and I can hardly imagine any of the leading publishers of our day having on their list an author who would have occasion to write them such a poem as Dryden once wrote and sent to his publisher when he had been refused an advance. He described the publisher as

“With leering looks, bull-faced and freckled skin,  
With two left legs and Judas-coloured hair  
And frowsy pores that taint the ambient air.”

To avoid the completion of the description the publisher sent the money — but one feels that a literary agent as a go-between would be welcome, if Dryden were the author.

I remember a few years ago when the manager of a telegraph office, near my place of business, told one of our messengers that “Yesterday was a great day for Jack London; your house and —— each telegraphed him a thousand dollars.”

It was my good fortune to enter the publishing business just in the midst of a most interesting period in the history of American literature, the period



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

of its expansion. It is the theory of Professor Pattee, in his "History of American Literature Since 1870," that the Civil War is largely responsible for this growth; that the war, as he says, educated the millions who were enrolled in the armies, most of them boys who had never before left their native neighborhoods, as well as the leaders who were developed everywhere, captains of men, engineers, organizers, financiers. "War," says Emerson, "passes the power of all chemical solvents, breaking up the old adhesions and allowing the atoms of society to take a new order." The war had set in motion mighty forces that did not stop when peace was declared; the West burst into eager life, railroads were pushed over the Rockies. Mark Twain, who was a part of it all, said later: "The eight years in America from 1860 to 1868 uprooted institutions that were centuries old, changed the politics of a people, transformed the social life of half the country, and wrought so profoundly upon the entire national character that the influence cannot be measured short of two or three generations."

The era of parlor-table books was over — the *Amaranth*, the *Forget-me-not*, *Female Poets of America*, the *Token*, and similar publications — wherein, as quoted in Pattee's history, you read for diversion such verses as:

## SIDNEY LANIER

“And I think as I sit alone,  
While the night wind is falling around,  
Of a cold, white gleaming stone  
And a long, lone grassy mound.”

The Centennial Exposition of 1876 was another quickener of the national life — the West, the South, the North came together at Philadelphia to strengthen the bonds of peace and good-fellowship. I have never forgotten the effect produced on me by the cantata which Sidney Lanier wrote for this festival, where it was sung to music by Dudley Buck — I had never heard of Lanier before, and I wondered at his boldness in writing in such, to me, strange and effective meter.

“From this hundred-terraced height,  
Sight more large with nobler light  
Ranges down yon towering years.”

Changing to

“Mayflower, Mayflower, slowly hither flying,  
Trembling westward o’er yon balking sea,”

and then to

“Jamestown, out of thee,  
Plymouth, thee — thee Albany,  
Winter cries, *ye freeze : away !*  
Fever cries, *ye burn : away ! . . .*

“Huguenots whispering yea in the dark,  
Puritans answering yea in the dark!”

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

I thought that I had never known such a perfect example of music in words.

The literature that was produced in these years by the new writers was purely American. Much of what Longfellow and Emerson and Hawthorne had done could have been the work of foreign writers — much, but far from all. “Evangeline” and “Hiawatha” and “The Scarlet Letter” are of the bone and sinew of America, but such men as George W. Cable, Bret Harte, Mark Twain, and Joel Chandler Harris were observers of actual scenes and happenings — reporters whose productions were touched with the divine fire of literary art.

The Philadelphia Centennial was also a great awakener of the art sense of the nation; it implanted an appreciation of art which was new to the American people. Hundreds of thousands of those who had never seen a good picture in their lives saw them there. The magazines of the time benefited by this, and after 1876 they could print a higher order of illustration and have it appreciated. New artists, too, were born of that great exhibition.

A writer whose published work began in those days was John Burroughs, a lovely man he was and is. We were together once in Washington, and I

## JOHN BURROUGHS

have never forgotten Burroughs's criticism of a group of stuffed animals in a taxidermist's window — he explained that a squirrel never sat just that way when he was eating a nut. It meant nothing at all to me, but it meant something to Burroughs.

It is forty-five years (and he was no fledgling writer then) since he made his first contribution to *Scribner's Monthly* in the number for August, 1873, with an article, "The Blue-Bird," "the peace-harbinger; in him the celestial and the terrestrial strike hands and are fast friends." John Burroughs never had a great idea of any "mission" for himself or any other; "It makes but little difference to which school you go," he wrote once, "whether to the woods or to the city. A sincere man learns pretty much the same thing in both places."

Genuine simplicity is the keynote of most of the nature-lovers I have known — John Muir, whose first contribution to *Scribner's Monthly* came in 1878, forty years ago, was like Burroughs in that; and another is Luther Burbank, writer as well as plant-wizard. I remember him, sitting in a Connecticut rocking-chair in his simple home at Santa Rosa, California, telling us of the future possibilities of the edible cactus which grew out under the window. I ate some of it — and was glad I did not have to depend on cactus for my daily food,

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though in an emergency I dare say it would save life.

To-day American nature writers are popular, but in 1865 no less a personage than James Russell Lowell, writing in the *North American Review*, regarded the writings of Thoreau as "one more symptom of the general liver complaint." "I look," he said, "upon a great deal of the modern sentimentalism about nature as a mark of disease."

It was said of Thoreau that "he talked about Nature just as if she'd been born and brought up in Concord." He was not read for a quarter of a century after he brought out his first book, "*A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers*," in 1849. Thoreau settled with the publisher of that book, four years after it appeared, and only two hundred and thirteen copies of the thousand printed having been sold, he brought home the remainder in a wheelbarrow and stored them away in his attic. He made this entry in his journal: "I now have a library of nearly nine hundred volumes, over seven hundred of which I wrote myself." I don't know why, but most of us regard Thoreau as a very elderly person — always elderly, probably by reason of the half-circle of whiskers seen in his portraits. He was thirty-two when he made that entry, and he died, as Stevenson died, at forty-four.

## MARGARET DELAND

Perhaps the best selling nature writer of all to-day is Seton-Thompson or Thompson Seton. When I first knew him he was drawing pictures of animals for The Century Dictionary and signing them "E.E.T." — Edward Ernest Thompson. I watched him as, having sloughed off the Edward, he grew a Seton and attached it, with a hyphen, to the front of Thompson, finally bringing it around, hyphenless, to the rear, where it stands to-day. But wild animals that Thompson Seton does not know are hardly worth knowing. His "Biography of a Grizzly" and "Wild Animals I Have Known" are classics.

A novelist whose work I have never published, but who has been for years a dear personal friend, is Margaret Deland — a born writer, fortunate enough to have had a friend who recognized it and brought her a great pile of pads and a lot of pencils and set her to work on her first novel, "John Ward, Preacher." Not long ago, writing to me of another matter, she referred to the reception of "John Ward, Preacher," when she was called a "scurrilous liar" and "libeler." A religious newspaper said of another book of hers that "the blasphemy of Ingersoll and the obscenity of Zola met in its pages." There is nothing that makes people see



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

redder than differences in religious belief. Mrs. De-land wrote her first poem in a butcher's shop and on his brown wrapping paper.

Henry James I saw first one Sunday afternoon, more than thirty years ago, at Edmund Gosse's in London. Gosse had delightful Sunday afternoons, when the servants went out and the literary guests waited upon themselves at an informal supper. Robert Browning was there — an English banker to the life, never talking about poetry, they told me, if he could help it. I can remember nothing of Browning — I suppose he did not talk to me, and as for Henry James I recall only his going around with a pile of small plates dealing one out very properly to each guest.

Edmund Gosse, poet, critic, and author of many books, was our literary representative in England for years, and through his unfailing efforts we secured many valuable literary prizes in the days before agents had come into their present vogue. Mrs. Gosse and Mrs. Alma Tadema were sisters, daughters of a famous cocoa manufacturer, and they were known among their intimates as "Grateful" and "Comforting."

On this same visit to England (my first, in 1886) I spent a Sunday with Professor Charles Wald-

## CHARLES WALDSTEIN

stein at his pleasant quarters in King's College, Cambridge. We had published his "Essays on the Art of Pheidias." Waldstein, who has since been knighted, was at that time director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, and he returned to Cambridge as professor after he had been for some years the head of the American School of Archæology at Athens. With my family I passed some weeks in Athens in the spring of 1890 while he was there, and we had many happy evenings, singing college songs with the students, led by the director.

At Cambridge we dined with fellows and dons in a wonderful wainscoted hall. Certainly they lived on the fat of the land, and on the juice of still sunnier lands. It was a delightful Saturday night, but never shall I forget an embarrassing incident of the following morning. Waldstein's English valet, tapping lightly on my door, entered with "the 'ot water, sir," and proceeded to put the room to rights and to brush my clothes. These had been left in a singular commingling upon a chair. Now I suppose it has happened to every one to wear garments for a last time — obviously it must have happened. I had returned the day before from a long tour on the Continent and in my bag (which the man had not unpacked because I had myself taken nearly everything out) were fresh and comely

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substitutes just bought in London. That valet held up my articles of clothing, one by one, brushed each of them stolidly and with equal consideration. I pulled the bedclothes over my head.

The last Sunday of the term had come just before my visit and Waldstein had held an afternoon reception in his rooms, when Prince "Eddie" (known as "Collars and Cuffs"), eldest son of the Prince of Wales, was present. The young man had been put under Waldstein's supervision by his father, afterwards King Edward VII. Prince "Eddie" died, it will be remembered, and the present King George V is a younger brother. Henry James was there that afternoon and Waldstein asked the prince if Mr. James could be presented. "Who's Henry James?" asked the young man, and on being told that he was an American novelist resident in his realm expressed no interest and turned on his heel.

They told a story of the prince, who did not seem to be very popular with his fellows. One day while out walking in the rain he encountered a classmate his head buried in a hedge.

"What are you trying to do?" asked Prince "Eddie."

"Lighting my pipe."

"Can't I help you?"

## H. G. WELLS

"You teach your grandmother to suck eggs," was the reply; the young man quickly adding, "Oh, say, you know, I beg your pardon; I had forgotten who your grandmother is."

It is further reported that the Royal Family were much amused over the idea of Her Majesty, the Queen, being taught to suck eggs.

In later years, during frequent trips to England, I have come to know a good many of the writers of to-day.

Mr. H. G. Wells is with a few changes "Mr. Britling," and the home described in the book is his home. Just before "Mr. Britling Sees It Through" appeared, I had a letter from Mr. Wells saying, "You'll find memories of your visit to Dunmow in 'Mr. Britling Sees It Through,' which will be published in September. Since you were here the house has been rebuilt." Knowing that there was an American in the book I had some qualms, but except for a few things that were said by some of us there was no reminder of me. The young German tutor was there, with big spectacles, his hair brushed straight back from his forehead — dead now, perhaps, in a Russian trench, as in the story. Letty is real, as is her husband, who did Mr. Wells's copying. One of his treasures hangs over

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

the study fireplace, an enlargement of a photograph of Langley's flying machine, built before the Wrights built theirs, flying above the Potomac River.

In "Mr. Britling Sees It Through" he has risen above the Wells we have known hitherto, and his letter to the German father will not be soon forgotten.

George Moore, a cheery, elderly gentleman with white hair and a ruddy face, is just about what his books show him to be. "What are the conventions?" he asked; — "I put my foot through them."

Chesterton is about the biggest man I ever saw, considerably more than six feet in height, with tangled curls on a great head set on his massive body. I rode with him once in an open automobile down Oxford Street and Piccadilly, and he attracted as much attention as the King going to open Parliament. "Why," I said, "they all know you." "Yes," replied Chesterton in a grieved tone, "and if they don't they ask."

## CHAPTER VIII

*Scribner's Monthly the first to take advertising — The growth of advertising — S. S. McClure — Edward Bok — Magazine editors — George William Curtis — The twenty-fifth anniversary of the dedication at Gettysburg — Lincoln at Gettysburg and at the Cooper Institute — A Lincoln lecture — The Barnard statue of Lincoln*

WHAT contributed more than anything else to the financial success of Scribner's Monthly from the first was the determination of Roswell Smith to take advertising. It seems strange to think of it to-day, but up to the beginning of that periodical magazines did not print advertising at all. A few small notices had sometimes appeared, but the business of advertisements, having a man who gave all his time to it, began with Scribner's Monthly. One of the Harper firm had strongly advised Roswell Smith not to attempt it, and for years after Scribner's Monthly had begun to hew its way through the prejudices of advertisers and of the public, Harper's had no advertising whatever except that of the publications of the house.

The firm of Harper & Bros. felt, perhaps, that it was good policy to keep its magazine clear of everything but announcements of its own publications, for these included not only the most important list



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

of books that any American house could boast — the great English novelists were all there — but also Harper's Weekly, Harper's Bazar and the Young People, then the Round Table. Mr. Rowell, the well-known advertising agent, says in his book: "Harper's in 1868 not only did not seek advertisements but actually declined to take them. The writer remembers listening with staring eyes, while Fletcher Harper the younger related that he had in the early seventies refused an offer of \$18,000 for the use of the last page of the magazine for a year for an advertisement of the Howe Sewing Machine."

But Scribner's Monthly had no other publications to consider — the Scribner firm used its pages for their announcements, but not to any great extent. They paid like any other advertiser, though perhaps at a special rate. The Scribner book house and "Scribner & Co.," formed in the beginning to publish Scribner's Monthly, were always separate houses.

In building up magazine advertising Roswell Smith was creating a monster of competition. It is the income from advertisements that has made possible the hundreds of magazines that cover the news-stands to-day. Without the "ads" very few of them would be alive. An ordinary page in The

## THE GROWTH OF ADVERTISING

Ladies' Home Journal costs, at the time this is written, \$6,500 for a single issue; the back cover, in color, \$12,000; an ordinary page in The Saturday Evening Post, \$5,000, and the double-page in the middle, in color, \$14,000. In a year the last named paper contains more than fifteen million dollars worth of advertising, and it seems likely that there will soon be a greater demand for space than it can supply. Five thousand dollars seems a great deal to pay for a single page of advertising, but if the magazine containing it has a circulation of two million copies, the advertiser is getting his circulars distributed among just the people he wants to reach at a cost of four circulars for a cent. In old times such a book as the Encyclopædia Britannica would be sold by canvassers — nothing else would be thought of. To-day advertising does it all — clever advertising it is too, the price carefully concealed, the only expenditure actually in sight being the dollar down.

Robert Bonner, who published The New York Ledger, was himself a great advertiser, but he never would allow a line of advertising to appear in his Ledger. He would take a whole page in a newspaper and print on it over and over again, "Fanny Fern writes only for The Ledger." "I get all the money I can lay hands on," he once said, "and throw

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

it out to the newspapers, and before I get back to the office, there it all is again and a lot more with it."

Before the Great War, England was spending half a billion dollars a year in advertising, and the rest of the world five or six times as much, that is, in all, between two and three billion dollars a year; and some of the cleverest minds in the world were engaged on ways of spending it; — and yet that know-it-all, Samuel Johnson, said, in 1759, "The trade of advertising is now so near to perfection that it is not easy to propose any improvement." In our day we are almost dependent on advertising, from the time we get up in the morning and take a bath in an advertised tub, putting on underclothes that we bought on the strength of the beautiful wrinkleless pictures in the back of our favorite magazine, until we spend the closing hours at a theater which we choose by looking through the advertisements in the evening paper.

There was a time when the advertising solicitor was hardly allowed to enter a front door, and it was expected when he did get in that he would have a liberal allowance of time to cool his heels. I have never forgotten my own experience, perhaps twenty-five or more years ago, getting advertisements for the programme of a great bazar to be held in the Metropolitan Opera House, in aid of a

## THE GROWTH OF ADVERTISING

hospital of which I was one of the directors. I went home at night in those soliciting days angry clear through at the treatment which I frequently received, and I can remember to this day the firms which were kind — and kindest of all the woman proprietor of a popular hair tonic who made me a friend for life by taking the back cover and doing it as if she thought there was a chance that I was a gentleman. God bless you, Mrs. Ayer!

If that was the attitude of the business houses of New York toward a man who was representing a charity, what must it have been toward those who were making a business of selling advertising? But that day is long past, and the advertising man is now treated in a business way. Great salaries are paid to clever advertisement writers, for, indeed, the way it is put makes all the difference in the world. There is a story of the advertisement of an umbrella lost in church, a conventional "ad" written by the umbrella loser. No answers. "Let me try," said an advertising man, and inserted this: "If the gentleman who was seen to take a silver-handled umbrella from the Parish Church on Sunday last attaches any value to the Christian character he has hitherto borne, he will return the article immediately to No. 1 Blank Street. He is known." It is said that a dozen umbrellas were sent in.

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

The publishers' lot is far from being a happy one to-day. Advertising in the monthlies has decreased, the price of paper has gone up, magazine prices have had to be increased, the fifteen-centers have become twenty-centers, and publishers whistle to keep up their courage, put in a few more pages, and call it "a bigger, better magazine." The thirty-five-centers cannot increase, for the simple reason that their publishers know people would not pay any more. They have to stand the reduced income, but fortunately for them there is more margin in thirty-five cents than in fifteen.

Time was when the advertising in a periodical was classified, so that it became a directory of the best goods on the market, but the directory days are over, and some magazines have even changed their form, so that with a larger page they may run reading matter beside the advertisements, to catch the eye of the reader, as many of the weeklies have been doing for years; with the result that sometimes we chase a story from the opening page, led by that will-o'-the-wisp, "Continued on page so-and-so," through an entire periodical, vaulting an occasional double-page "ad," until the heroine falls into the hero's arms just as we are about to turn the back cover.



## S. S. McCLURE

S. S. McClure was in our office for a few months and worked in my publicity department. He had come to New York with ten dollars in his pocket and a letter of introduction to Roswell Smith from Colonel Pope of Boston, for whom McClure had edited a little magazine called *The Wheelman*. At first Mr. Smith helped him to get a place at the De Vinne Press. When later he took him into our office, we found very soon that we had that *rara avis*, a clerk with ideas. In his "Autobiography" McClure tells how the plan came to him for a syndicate which should sell stories to the newspapers and that he first offered the idea to us, but that we did not think best to take it up — nor was it best, for our heart and soul were in the two magazines *The Century* and *St. Nicholas*, and these must be first considered in any buying of stories. But I have a very different notion of the way that the idea came to McClure; it was a Christmas supplement to country newspapers that he wanted to get up at first; and I remember the four-page dummy which he made and pasted together to show the plan — on the first page a heading, "Christmas Supplement to —," a picture in the middle, and a couple of stories on the rest of that page and on pages 2 and 3. On the fourth page was to be a prospectus of the coming year of *The Century*, and the idea



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

was to sell this four-page sheet for a trifling sum to cover cost of paper, or to give it away if necessary, for the sake of advertising the prospectus in the country paper which would use it in quantities.

Mr. Smith felt that McClure ought to work out such a scheme for himself, and he gave him his blessing and a month's salary, telling him to come back to us if he wanted to, but that he had it in him to make his way alone. McClure then modified the Christmas supplement plan, and instead of attempting to get up a paper, he bought a story, had it set up in a newspaper office, and sold the proofs and the right of simultaneous publication to a number of papers. McClure paid \$250 for the story and his returns were \$50 less than that. He says in his "Autobiography" that he then came to our office, borrowed \$5 from a young man he had worked with, went to Philadelphia and sold more stories, borrowed money from a relative and went to Washington, sold more stories, and so home to New York.

McClure tells, too, of the long uphill fight he had over that syndicate, and no sooner was it well launched than he was seized with the idea of publishing a magazine, and then came another long fight, for the magazine was started at the height of the panic of 1893. He printed 20,000 copies of the

## S. S. McCLURE

first number — the News Company returned 12,000 unsold. The 8000 sold brought in \$600 and had cost thousands. Colonel Pope gave him a check for \$1000 for advertising to be done in the future, the printer gave him more credit, and some time after, when he was at the very lowest ebb, kind-hearted Conan Doyle, who was in this country on a lecture tour, told him he would like to put some money into his business, that he believed in the magazine and in him, and drew his check for \$5000. "When that check was written," says McClure, "it put new life into the office staff. Every one felt a new vigor and a new hope."

And so McClure has gone on — a dreamer from boyhood, but a dreamer of great dreams, a square man, never seeking riches, only to do great things, and he has had friends who believed in him and helped him. There never was a man in whose brain more new ideas tumbled over themselves in an effort to get out — not all were good. Perhaps there was one such man, Roswell Smith; he would come down to the office every morning with about three new ideas for the business. It would usually take us till eleven o'clock to prove to Mr. Smith that two of them were not worth doing — and all the rest of the day to carry out the other one.

I remember coming up from Washington once,

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

when McClure entered the buffet-smoker and sat down beside me. Immediately he began to tell me of the big ideas that had come to him for his magazine while he was in Washington. He checked them off on his fingers — one, two, three, four, five. After a while he wandered across the car, sat down beside another man, and presently I saw the fingers being counted off, one, two, three, four, five, — and I knew that the other man too was being made the recipient of a literary confidence. He once engaged Elizabeth Stuart Phelps to write a life of Christ, but he had to decline it, because, as he said, he wanted “a more snappy life of Christ.”

Edward Bok, who has been for more than twenty-five years the very successful editor of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, started “Bok's Literary Leaves” in as small a way as McClure started his syndicate. As a boy in Brooklyn, Bok collected autographs and attracted the attention of Henry Ward Beecher, who was always his friend. While he was an advertising solicitor for a house-paper which the Scribners published — and I remember as if it were only yesterday his coming in to get advertisements — he began to write to literary people, finding out their plans, what they would write next, where they were going for the summer, harmless

## EDWARD BOK

and interesting bits of information which he made up into little items, with the permission of the people treated, selling a half-column of them weekly to a syndicate of papers. This gave him a great acquaintance with authors and their confidence, and when Mr. Curtis, having a small paper of about 30,000 circulation, looked around for an editor, Bok was chosen. As Bok has made a great success of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, so George Lorimer, untrammelled, has made an equal success of *The Saturday Evening Post*, for it has always been Mr. Curtis's policy to get the best man he can find for a position and then give him his head.

There is perhaps no periodical in America the personality of whose editor counts for so much with its readers as Bok's personality counts with the readers of *The Ladies' Home Journal* unless we except Mrs. Honoré Willsie, editor of *The Delineator*.

The great public does not know who edits most of the magazines of the day, and oftentimes departments which bring the writer's personality very close to its readers are carried on for years without the reader knowing whose that personality is. Of late the name of the writer of the "Editor's Easy Chair" in Harper's Magazine has been printed, but for decades the public read the "Easy Chair" without knowing the author. Donald G.

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

Mitchell ("Ik Marvel") wrote it at first, referring to it as "an old red-backed easy chair"; then George William Curtis. Since December, 1900, William Dean Howells has filled the "Chair." For seventy years, with a few intervals, this delightful department has gone on, touching lightly upon the topics which filled people's minds, carrying back their thoughts to other days, or helping them to store up wisdom for the future.

George William Curtis, reformer, journalist, littérateur, was the orator of the day at the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the dedication of the cemetery at Gettysburg — a dedication which will always outrank any other of its kind in the minds of Americans by reason of Lincoln's immortal words spoken on that July day in 1863, with the war still raging, its outcome uncertain except to the clear faith of the speaker and a few like him. Through Gilder's thoughtfulness I was one of a party which went with Mr. Curtis to the celebration in July, 1888. We had a private car, which was switched off close to the battle-field, and on our car we ate and slept for three days. In a copy of General Abner Doubleday's little booklet, "Gettysburg Made Plain," which I must have taken with me, are the autographs of all the mem-



George William Curtis.  
Deas H. Smith  
W. W. Loomis  
Alfred P. Bolles  
James Part  
Richard W. Fisher

William F. Otto

Wm. H. H. H.

Mr. E. P. P.

E. L. Godkin

Francis. Barlow

A PAGE OF THE AUTOGRAPHS OF GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS AND HIS PARTY ON  
THE TRIP TO GETTYSBURG, JULY 3 AND 4, 1888

Mr. Curtis delivered the oration on the occasion of the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary  
of the dedication of the cemetery. The autographs were written on the fly-leaf of the pamphlet  
"Gettysburg Made Plain."





## GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS

bers of the party. I was the youngest and am the only one now living.

George William Curtis

Silas W. Burt (at one time Naval Officer of the Port of New York)

W. W. Ellsworth

Alfred P. Bolles

James Burt

Richard Watson Gilder

Henry G. Pearson (the independent Postmaster of New York City)

William Potts.

Walter Howe (a Congressman who was drowned at Newport, Rhode Island, soon after)

John E. Parsons

E. L. Godkin (editor of the New York Evening Post and The Nation)

Francis C. Barlow (a general who fought at Gettysburg and who visited it then for the first time since the battle)

We numbered twelve. Walter Howe presided at table, and we sat long over our meals. Every man was a civil-service reformer and a personal friend of Mr. Curtis. Such talk! Why could it not have been recorded? There was a book in it — a book of literary and political reminiscence, a record of high endeavor, enlivened with repartee and wit.

The way in which our orator, Mr. Curtis, used his notes made a great impression upon me. His was a long speech, notes were necessary, but to use

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

a desk was not advisable in an outdoor address before a great multitude. He had had the manuscript set up for Harper's Weekly (of which he was editor), the proofs cut and pasted on strong slips like a pack of cards which he held comfortably in his left hand, using both hands for gestures. One who tries this should make no secret of his notes, but of course he should be so familiar with his speech as not to be at all confined to them.

Mr. Curtis stood in the new rostrum; the old one which Lincoln used was no longer there. We all know how little impression was made by Lincoln's speech at the time of its delivery. A Gettysburg lady, a dear friend, who died only a few months ago, told me of her own feelings, when as a girl of fifteen she stood in the swaying crowd, just under the rostrum through Edward Everett's long oration. "And then," she said, "the tallest and most awkward man I ever saw in my life got up and said a few words and we were all glad to go home."

Of Lincoln's awkwardness as a speaker Mr. Cephas Brainerd, now deceased, has often told me. He said that Lincoln's favorite gesture during the famous Cooper Institute speech was rubbing his stomach with one hand, gesticulating with the other, and then changing hands. But no speech before or since ever made such an impression upon

## LINCOLN IN NEW YORK

Mr. Brainerd or upon Mr. Joseph H. Choate or any of the distinguished company which, as Mr. Choate said, Mr. Lincoln that night "held in the hollow of his hand." William Cullen Bryant presided; David Dudley Field escorted the speaker to the platform.

Mr. Brainerd and Mr. C. C. Nott afterwards printed a pamphlet in which every one of the many historical allusions in the address, delivered entirely without notes, was verified. Mr. Brainerd and Mr. Nott (the latter was appointed by Mr. Lincoln later a judge of the United States Court of Claims) were a committee of the Young Men's Central Republican Union which brought Mr. Lincoln to New York, paying him two hundred dollars for the speech, and it was the duty of these two young men to see that the speaker was conducted to the hall and returned to his hotel, the Astor House. I do not know how their guest arrived, but Mr. Nott was to take him back. Mr. Lincoln wanted to walk, and the two men started together down Broadway, but Mr. Lincoln's boots hurt him, and they went over to a side avenue and took a horse-car. When Mr. Nott arrived at his own street he told his guest to stay right in the car and it would stop just beside the Astor House — and so, good-night. This was in February, 1860. It was in April, 1865, that the body of Lincoln lay in

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

state in the rotunda of the New York City Hall, while half a million people passed by in silence to honor the great dead. Only five years lay between the dates, but what eventful years they were! The almost unknown speaker who had come out of the West, had led his country safely through its great conflict and had found a place beside Washington in the American Valhalla.

A lecture which I prepared for the one-hundredth-year celebration of Lincoln's birth, in 1909, was given that season at the Century Club, Mr. Gilder, then chairman of the Committee on Art and Literature, presiding. At the close of the lecture he asked all those present (in an audience of perhaps 150 or 200 men) who had seen Lincoln, to stand, and twenty-six stood. Gilder was among them, for as a young soldier he had guarded the bier at Philadelphia, and had seen Lincoln dead in his coffin. Then he asked all those who had talked with Lincoln to stand, and thirteen arose. I wish I had their names. I remember Mr. Brainerd, and Horace White who reported the Lincoln-Douglas debates for the Chicago Tribune. Mr. Choate was not present, but he heard the lecture a few weeks later at the home of Mr. John S. Kennedy, and gave us afterwards his own impressions of the Cooper Institute speech. He said that Lincoln was



To  
Mrs. Elsworth with the  
kindest regards  
John Wilson Adams





## THE BARNARD LINCOLN

awkward, but "when he spoke he was transformed."

There has been a great deal said against the Barnard statue of Lincoln in Cincinnati, and many of our best critics have expressed the hope that a replica of it will not be sent abroad. I am inclined to hope so, too, for I fear it would be misunderstood; the Saint-Gaudens standing Lincoln is fitting and safer for the purpose, the figure is more like what Europe has learned to regard as the figure of a statesman. Yet I cannot believe that many of the critics have seen the Barnard statue, but rather have judged from photographs. Some of them have called it "ridiculous" and "deformed," an "uncouth backwoodsman," "awkward," "meaningless," its "hands clasped on its stomach." I stood before the statue for an hour one afternoon in Cincinnati, and I found the embodiment of a man with a soul, a soul which might indeed have been Lincoln's, a figure which to me typified the burden-bearer of the ages.<sup>1</sup>

The face is a poetic realization of Volk's life-mask — but living, suffering. Of the clothes you do not think at all, any more than you would if you

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written it has been decided that the Saint-Gaudens Lincoln shall go to London, the Barnard to Manchester. A wise decision, nor will Manchester have a statue of which it will be in the least ashamed.

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

were talking with Lincoln himself. The face holds you. If you finally let your eyes rest on the clothes you will not find them noticeably ill-fitting. The collar is lower than any I have happened to see in a portrait, but it is quite possible that Lincoln wore such a collar. The Adam's apple is very prominent — Lincoln's was — and in the bronze it shines, which is a fault. One hand holds the other wrist in an awkward but not unnatural way. The feet are larger and coarser than in any photograph I have seen, much too large I think; I said so to a man standing near who wanted to talk about the statue. He was certainly a man of the people, tobacco juice ran down his chin, and his breath was redolent of the whiskey which comes from just across the Ohio River.

"Why," he said, "them feet *had* to be big to balance that big figger. You would n't like it if he'd 'a' been anchored to small feet."

Just then two ragged little urchins, a corner of the shirt-tail of one sticking far out of a hole in his trousers, came running up to the statue, climbed on the rough stone which forms the pedestal and began patting those big feet, for the figure stands low, the ankles about level with the spectator's waist.

Saint-Gaudens's Lincoln is the statesman, the

## THE BARNARD LINCOLN

President, typified by the chair of state which stands behind it. The striking difference in the figures is that such a chair would be utterly incongruous behind Barnard's statue, which is rather the awkward speaker at Cooper Institute. But it would be a hardened critic who could stand without prejudice, before the rougher, more uncouth figure, and let its eyes look into his eyes, its soul speak to his soul, and not be moved by the experience.

## CHAPTER IX

*Richard Watson Gilder*

ONE of the greatest privileges of my life was an association for more than thirty years with Richard Watson Gilder. He became editor-in-chief of the magazine on the death of Dr. Holland in 1881, and even before Dr. Holland's death authors and artists were coming to us on account of Gilder. No stronger and no kinder editor ever lived. As quoted in the volume "Letters from Richard Watson Gilder," edited by his daughter Rosamond, Bill Nye wrote of him that "he could return rejected manuscripts in such a gentle and caressing way that the disappointed scribblers came to him from hundreds of miles away to thank him for his kindness — and stay to dinner with him." And George W. Cable said: "I think he was peculiarly an author's editor, and not merely a publisher's. He never dealt with one's literary products merely as wares for the market, but with their source, the author, and with his pages as things still hopefully in the making. Throughout his career he was one of the finest uplifting forces in the literary world."

He came of a talented family; all of his brothers

## JEANNETTE GILDER

and sisters were clever people; his sister Jeannette, who with her brother Joseph founded and for many years carried on *The Critic*, was a woman of rare gifts — the first and best of New York women journalists. When she was about to start *The Critic* she asked Roswell Smith's opinion on her venture, and he gave her *Punch's* advice to those about to marry. Nevertheless she went on and made a periodical which, while never greatly profitable, became a real force in current literature and helped to interest the public in books and writers.

For years she wrote — newspaper articles, fiction, plays; out of her great, kind heart she helped struggling authors (and struggling publishers), she acted as a medium to bring together authors and publishers, playwrights and managers. She was a general mother-superior in the literary world of New York. She was independent, was the first of her sex to shed the cumbersome hoop-skirt and wear a dress which came nearer to the supports which God had given her. She wore a man's shirt and collar and stock, and a coat that was almost a man's, but she was never a suffragist; she could go anywhere and everywhere that men went; her dress was a protest against sex allure or any thought but straight business; she always looked comfortable and perfectly proper — and the publisher who



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

would not push a pile of manuscripts off a chair and gladly make it ready for Jennie Gilder to sit down for one of her suggestive, newsy talks, was unknown in my world.

What Richard Watson Gilder did for American literature and art is a story that would be days in the telling. On his first journey to Europe, I remember his bringing back material and pictures for the first article in an American magazine on Jean François Millet, whose work was soon known everywhere. The *Century* in those days was first in everything that was fine, including golf. Living in Yonkers I knew about the links which John Reid, "the father of American golf," had laid out there, and I suggested to Gilder an article on the new game, with diagrams. For he and his associates, Johnson and Buel, were foremost in descriptions of practical things, as well as in things of the spirit — they had Frank Sprague, who built the first trolley, write about it, Langley on Astronomy, Professor Lowell on Mars, Madam Curie on Radium. The *Century*'s "Story of the Captains" was the most illuminating contribution made to Spanish War literature. The *Century* (and the old Scribner's) sometimes found room for articles on inventions which were only dreams at the time, but which we have seen come true, notably Edmund Clarence Stedman's re-

## EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

markable paper, "Aerial Navigation," printed in 1879, with plans and diagrams which Mr. Stedman had drawn twenty years before. There are illustrations of dirigibles which might almost have been made from those we have seen in 1919. Mr. Stedman may have been an amateur (he said in the article "We are all amateurs of something"), but if at the time his suggestions could have been acted upon, that governments with unlimited capital or a group of wealthy men should really concern themselves with bringing about the possibilities which he saw so clearly, dirigibles might have been flying years ago. That the fish was the true model, that a structure could be made that could be guided upon a level with side vans or a screw, taking power from an electric engine, were his chief points, and in the completed airship he believed just as he believed "the North Pole could be reached, or the Isthmus of Darien cut through, if the first order of professional talent were commanded to undertake the job, and equipped with every resource." And this great idea was conceived by Stedman, then a young fellow only a few years out of college (*put out, too*), while floating in a boat on Greenwood Lake and looking down into the clear water. The year was eighteen hundred and fifty-nine.

No matter how perfect an editor may be he will

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

have some regrets. Gilder had a few — one was declining what many consider Richard Harding Davis's best story, "Gallegher," and he never got over it. The magazine had been criticized for printing something that was too slangy, and Gilder (on a hasty reading) was afraid of Davis's office boy. Another declination that he regretted was Bunner's exquisite poem, "The Way to Arcady," which was turned down because it was considered too long. Another magazine printed it.

"The Letters of Richard Watson Gilder" contains a record of which any family may be proud, and the story of Gilder's life is told in what is practically an autobiography and one which was written without any idea that the letters which compose it would go beyond the persons to whom they were sent. He tells his own story and with absolute unconsciousness. Through it all runs the joy which he took in his verse, that great gift which was a never-failing fountain of delight, on which he drew more or less through every day of his life. There was seldom a time when he had not at least one poem in the making. That sometimes he brought to me his poetry before printing or before final copying was to me a great pleasure, and often I would try to persuade him to write more smoothly, to add a syllable that I felt should be there, to make the ac-

## RICHARD WATSON GILDER

cent a little less labored. And frequently he would yield, but at other times he would argue it out. "Why have all the lines smooth? Why not keep in a roughness sometimes when it makes the lines near seem smoother by the contrast? Don't you know your Browning?" I am sure that my criticisms never hurt his poetry and it is a satisfaction to think that sometimes they may have helped. It is a joy to his friends that Gilder's reputation as a poet is growing. Always in his verse there is beauty and strength — some of his subjects are ephemeral, but most of them are eternal.

From a letter which he wrote to Talcott Williams in 1900, and which he called his "Apologia," I make these extracts. It is given in full in the volume of "Letters":

. . . With me it [verse] has been almost exclusively a note from an inner pain or happiness. When the music (if music it is) has once taken form, the art sense goes to work and seeks perfection; and my feeling has been that lyric words should have something akin to the lyric tones of Schubert's Songs. Now, you see, all that comes from the outside to the rhymer of rhymes is just so much added, a gratuity of Providence; and so the words that come from others who have felt the same things and are touched, the praise of workmanship or rather of art, the (to me) surprising appreciation of certain philosophic authorities, all this is a gift of the gods to be humbly grateful for. . . .

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

. . . These songs have come out of the life I was leading, the turmoil and stress and passion of moral and other conflict. It is not for me to give a moment's thought to fame, even to influence, but to do what seems my duty in an active world, only endeavoring that when the word comes it shall come as clearly and convincingly and with as much music as may be.

This is my "Apologia"; I have no regrets. I could have done no otherwise. I wish my voice had had more power, but nothing that I could have done would have changed that. We have the genius with which we are born; the Lord of Life will not blame us for having less than our lofty neighbors are endowed with.

I have the letter which Gilder sent to his associates on his fiftieth birthday, and as, by some neglect (probably because it was in a frame with a portrait) I did not send it to his daughter Rosamond for her book, I print it here:

*New York, February 8, 1894*

MY DEAR FRIENDS AND COMRADES:

I want to thank all of you and each of you for the kind and brotherly send-off you gave me to-day; you passed me over the line with a delicacy and tenderness that I deeply appreciate. I have a firm faith that age is relative; that is, that one is "wound up" to run a certain length of time and may be a young man at fifty if he is wound up (barring accidents) to run a hundred; and an old man at fifty if he is wound up to run to fifty-one. I speak now of heredity — but environment has much to do with it, and I do think that in the happy fellowship of our work here we are all kept young to-



## RICHARD WATSON GILDER

gether. Our work is interesting and congenial, has national bearings that inspire us all, and each man here is his brother's keeper.

With an affectionate look backward toward those who are gone, and with a spirit of friendship and mutual helpfulness among the band that I pray God may be long unbroken — we can press on cheerfully in our work while the milestones of the years mark accomplishment and not regret.

Always affectionately and faithfully  
R. W. GILDER

With Gilder as editor-in-chief there never was any of the jealousy or friction which sometimes exists in publishing offices between the business department and the editorial rooms. There are editors who carry their prerogatives about with them like the quills of a porcupine, upon which their business associates are forever being impaled. With Gilder there was always harmony; all worked together; it made no difference to him where a suggestion came from if it was a good one. Important matters like serials were always discussed with the business department; in fact much of the correspondence about serials and the question of payment were usually managed by the business office — always with perfect coöperation in the editorial room. The yearly announcements, the "prospectus," were written by Gilder, with the help of his associates. I can remember



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

but one dispute that ever arose, and the reason of that I cannot recall. I can only remember Gilder's pale face, a red spot in each cheek, and a real flash in his eyes. I am quite sure he was in the right. The foundation of his character was spiritual strength, and it was on this that his gentleness rested.

When Dr. Holland died, Roswell Smith suggested to Gilder that he should show him proofs of his editorials for a while, — the policy of the magazine was something that Mr. Smith, as chief owner, thought he should know about, — but Gilder declined absolutely. He liked to show proofs to Mr. Smith on his own initiative, but if Mr. Smith did not trust him to write editorials, if showing proof was a demand, his resignation was ready. Mr. Smith withdrew the request immediately — of course he trusted Gilder.

Mr. Gilder's Friday evenings at his home in Fifteenth Street, a house that had been made over from a stable, were a feature of literary life in New York for many years. "To the hospitable welcome of this modest dwelling," wrote Will Low, "every one who came to New York in those days, bearing a passport of intellectual worth, appeared to find his way." What a house that was! So simple, so genuine — a little place to hang your hat and overcoat,

"NOT·TEARS·BVT·JOLLITY"

IN·HONOR·OF

RICHARD WATSON  
GILDER

ON·THE·COMPLETION  
OF·HIS·FORTIETH·YEAR  
FEBRVARY·8TH·1884:

"THE·DAY·IS·OVRS"



"HANDS·PRESSED·FOR·A  
TOKEN"

FRONT COVER OF THE MENU OF RICHARD WATSON GILDER'S FORTIETH-YEAR  
BIRTHDAY DINNER



## RICHARD WATSON GILDER

then a great room, always bright with sunshine coming through the windows cut in the big stable-doors, or with lamps and candles; a Saint-Gaudens bas-relief above the open fireplace where the kettle hung. They ate and lived in that big room; upstairs I suppose were bedrooms, for they must have slept sometimes, somewhere.

One thing that gave great pleasure to the whole group of young artists and literary people in my early days in New York was that so many who were friends for life started together, — Gilder, Saint-Gaudens, Will Low, Blashfield, Carroll Beckwith, Hopkinson Smith, Kenyon Cox, Drake, Frank Millet, H. C. Bunner, and many like them. Some of these men, with Mr. and Mrs. Gilder, founded the Society of American Artists, the first meeting of which was held in the studio at 103 East Fifteenth Street in 1877, being an immediate result of Saint-Gaudens having become “as mad as hops” over the turning-down of a piece of sculpture which he had sent to the Academy.

The Friday evenings went on when the growing Gilder family fairly burst through the walls of the little studio and moved into larger and somewhat more conventional quarters in what was then Clinton Place; the receptions (they could hardly be called that) were very simple; I suppose there must

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

have been "refreshments," but I cannot remember anything but the people. You met Paderewski and Madame Modjeska, Duse, Jefferson, Aus der Ohe, Kipling, Sargent, Cecilia Beaux — they came and they found something to bear away with them. Mrs. Gilder's idea in being at home week after week was "that people shall meet often and have something in common." Music was, of course, what best held them together, and such music! The inspiration of many of Gilder's poems came from the music at these Friday evenings.

Not all poets have a sense of humor, but Gilder had and it was a strong sense as may be seen in the volume of "Letters." Gilder and Dr. Holland were walking up Fifth Avenue one day many years ago, when Gilder did not know his New York as he came to know it and love it in later years. Perhaps he knew it, but had this joke up his sleeve.

"What church is that?" asked Gilder, indicating the narrow front of the church which stands on the east side of the street between Forty-fifth and Forty-sixth Streets, the body of it inside the block.

"The Church of the Heavenly Rest," answered Dr. Holland.

"Oh," said Gilder, "and where is the 'rest' of it?"

## RICHARD WATSON GILDER

And he had a friendly touch. Among my papers is a big scrawl in his handwriting.

Welkim 'ome!

R. W. G.

I found it on my desk coming back from some European trip.

One of the most enjoyable experiences of Gilder's life was his close intimacy with Mr. Cleveland, in the days when Mr. Cleveland occupied the White House and later when he became a private citizen, honored by his countrymen. I can remember the day in June, 1887, when Gilder came to my desk and told me of the very unusual experience he had been having. Going to Wells College to deliver a commencement address he had met the young lady who was about to become the bride of the President of the United States, and had escorted her to Washington, and there he had been presented to the President.

It was the beginning of a warm friendship. The President, a man who knew all about politics and politicians, but at heart just as much of an idealist as Gilder, was drawn to the high-minded editor



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

and poet with bonds which tightened as the years went by.

It was Gilder who brought about a meeting between Joseph Jefferson and Grover Cleveland. He asked Mr. Cleveland to invite Mr. and Mrs. Jefferson to dine at the White House, which he did. Jefferson did n't want to go, — "Why should I dress up," he said, "and go to the White House?" But he went, and a friendship began, based at first upon a mutual love of fishing, which lasted through their lives. In the summer at Marion the three men, Cleveland, Jefferson, and Gilder, were much together. The first two were fishermen born and bred, but Gilder never was exactly that. He would go out in a boat with the others and do his share, but the ecstatic joy of the fisherman was never his. In the evenings, around the big fireplace in the Gilder studio, he was at his best.

On the completion of Gilder's fortieth year, February 7, 1884, we had given him a dinner. The front page of the menu bears two quotations from his poems, "Not tears but jollity" and "Hands pressed for a token," with little thumb-nail pictures of his three homes — the birthplace, Belle Vue, Bordentown, New Jersey, the Marion house, and the Fifteenth Street house. On the next page Shakespeare is invoked with

LAVRELS AND FLOWERS

R. Gieder

Lark, S.E., B.E.S., T.H., W.7.C, Rug, B.H., \$, A.P., C.B., R.G., S.H., L.H.

"WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND BEEN  
HATH NOT IT GROWN  
PART OF OVR VERY SELVES?"



The guests wrote their initials in the laurel leaves



## RICHARD WATSON GILDER

“Shadows to-night  
Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard  
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers.”

Between the entry of each course (and there were many of them — shall we ever have such feasts again?) was a bit of Gilder's verse, from

“'T is of the pearly shell  
That murmurs of the far-off murmuring sea”

with the oysters, to the “impromptu toasts,”

“A sea this is, beware who ventureth.”

On one page are the autographs of all who were present. Here they are just as they signed — more than half of them have passed on:

|                     |                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| H. C. Bunner        | Roswell Smith           |
| William Carey       | Edmund Clarence Stedman |
| W. W. Ellsworth     | C. C. Buel              |
| George Inness, Jr.  | Theodore L. DeVinne     |
| W. F. Clarke        | Aug. St. Gaudens        |
| Chas. F. Chichester | A. W. Drake             |
| E. S. Nadal         | Joseph B. Gilder        |
| R. U. Johnson       | Benj. E. Smith          |
| Frank H. Scott      | W. Lewis Fraser         |
| Brander Matthews    | Henry Gallup Paine      |

On the back there was a gold laurel wreath for Gilder's name, the initials of the guests on the leaves, and at the top,

“And for this poet of ours  
Laurels and flowers.”

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

I felt differently toward Gilder than toward any man I ever knew. I had for him an affection which is like the love a man has for a woman; yet there was nothing effeminate in his nature, he was as virile as a man can be, but one wanted always to be at his best with Gilder. He brought out all the good there was in his friends — and one could never willingly bring a shadow over those deep, brown eyes.

At Mark Twain's funeral in the Brick Church I saw Mrs. Gilder for the first time since her husband's death. She was at the end of the pew, and as I stood aside to let her pass, I put out my hand, but she went by, with her head down. The next day I had a letter from her, telling me of her husband's love for me and how the thought of it had come over her there in the church and she knew she would break down if she stopped to take my hand and speak. I thought afterwards of how two men may love each other for a lifetime and neither one know it of the other, and I made up my mind that I would not keep such affection to myself ever again.

## CHAPTER X

### *Augustus Saint-Gaudens*

THERE is another friendship which I would record here, one which, looking back upon it, seems to run side by side with my friendship for Gilder. And Augustus Saint-Gaudens, sculptor, and Richard Watson Gilder, poet and editor, were themselves comrades, and had been long before I knew either of them. It is strange how closely their lives fitted together, each of them striving always to give out the best there was in him, each serene, true to his ideals, never yielding a hair's breadth to make his work more "popular." Each greatly admired the other — and they were as simple as two school-boys.

Gilder, born in 1844 and dying in 1909, had six years more of life than his friend, who was born in 1848 and died in 1907.

In the volume of Gilder "Letters" there is one to me written August 27, 1907, beginning:

Rejoice with me and be exceeding glad. The Lord on High has let me write

"Under the Stars  
A Requiem for Augustus Saint-Gaudens."



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

The first words came to me the night we had word of his death.<sup>1</sup> I did not tell you when I saw you, for I knew not what might come of it. But there it is! An ode. . . . Every stanza begins with an invocation to the stars, and it all *reeks* with Saint-Gaudens and his works. . . .

I began to know Saint-Gaudens when he was thirty-two years old. It was in the autumn of 1880 that I went to live in the newly opened Sherwood Studio Building, at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Fifty-seventh Street, then, as now, the ugliest building in the city, but out of its doors have been borne some of the greatest works of art that have been produced in New York. Only one building, perhaps, can surpass its record, the old Tenth Street Studios. At the Sherwood lived Carroll Beckwith, Anderson, Shurtleff, Wyant, and many other artists. Saint-Gaudens occupied two of the studio suites, one to live in, one for his work. His son Homer and my son Bradford were born in the same month while we were in the Sherwood.

Saint-Gaudens was a rare and beautiful soul, living for sculpture, yet interested in much beside,

<sup>1</sup> "O kindred stars, wherethrough his soul in flight  
Passed to the immortals! 'neath your ageless light  
I stand perplexed, remembering that keen spirit  
Quenched in mid-strength; the world, that shall inherit  
His legacy of genius, all deprived  
Of wealth untold, the still ungathered fruit  
Of that great art! What honey all unhived;  
What unborn grandeurs; noble music mute!"

## AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS

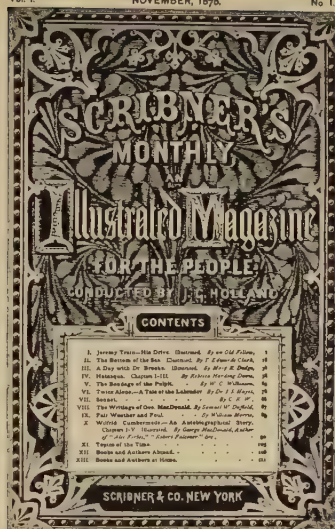
especially in music. The Sunday afternoon concerts by a string quartette, which continued for many years, began in his Thirty-sixth Street studio. About forty men — worth-while men they were too — belonged to the little coterie which met in that studio weekly to hear the best chamber music that had ever been written, surrounded by strange shapes draped with wet cloths, plaster models, frames, and all the queer things that a sculptor brings together.

Saint-Gaudens would work on a statue sometimes far beyond the point where there was any profit left in it. John La Farge was like that with his windows. La Farge would smash the exquisite glass of a completed window unhesitatingly if the colors and combinations did not suit him exactly. Saint-Gaudens would do a statue over and over. He used to say that anybody could be a sculptor; all one had to do was to go at it and keep at it until the figure suited him. He was quick to act upon suggestions if they came from people in whom he had confidence, and he had probably a higher regard for the judgment of Stanford White, who made so many of his pedestals, than for that of any other man, though he and White did not always agree. He had great respect for his wife's opinion of a work of art.

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

It was Gilder who made the suggestion that the head of the standing Lincoln (now in Lincoln Park, Chicago) should be tipped forward. It humanized the figure. Originally the face looked straight ahead, now the eyes seem to fall upon the people to whom he is speaking. Many of Saint-Gaudens's statues have been reproduced effectively in small sizes, The Puritan, Diana of the Madison Square Garden tower, and others, but it has never been possible to make the standing Lincoln in a small size, as Mr. Saint-Gaudens wished the chair behind the figure to be always a part of the ensemble. Made small it would be a doll's chair.

The Century's cover in two shades of brown, first used in the seventies under the Scribner name, was the design of Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Stanford White, and it utilized for the first time in modern commercial decoration the art of the Greeks. It is almost a copy of a design on a Greek tomb, and I think it stands to-day as the best magazine cover ever made. After using it for some years, more variety seemed to be demanded, and Elihu Vedder was asked to design four ornaments, to be added to the original cover at special seasons. Later the Vedder covers were dropped and still later the beautiful Saint-Gaudens-White design was suppressed, and the rage for variety now makes



Cover of the first number of  
Scribner's Monthly

# SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE



Cover design by Stanford White  
and Augustus Saint-Gaudens, first  
used in November, 1880

# THE CENTURY ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY MAGAZINE



The White-Saint-Gaudens design  
with the lettering strengthened (used  
after the change of name) and with  
the addition of a design by Elihu  
Vedder, changed at different seasons



## AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS

every cover different from any other, as is the case with nearly all the magazines that blossom in red and blue and yellow on the news-stands of the land.

Saint-Gaudens would spend years on a work if he felt that any improvement was possible, — ten years on the Sherman statue, fourteen on the Shaw Monument, which stands facing the Boston State House — the noblest high-relief that our country has ever seen. I remember meeting Edward Atkinson of Boston in Saint-Gaudens's studio, when he told me that he was the only one left alive of the original committee formed to arrange for the relief, and the day of the unveiling was still in the unknown future. But what matters it now if the sculptor had spent twice fourteen years? He made a masterpiece which will stand for ages, like Michelangelo's Lorenzo de' Medici.<sup>1</sup> It seems a long time ago that I sat on the balcony of Delmonico's, then at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Twenty-sixth Street, and watched the ceremonies at the unveiling of Saint-Gaudens's noble statue of Far-

<sup>1</sup> In that delightful volume, *The Education of Henry Adams*, one finds this characterization of Saint-Gaudens (p. 385):

"Of all the American artists who gave to American art whatever life it breathed in the seventies, Saint-Gaudens was perhaps the most sympathetic, but certainly the most inarticulate. General Grant or Don Cameron had scarcely less instinct of rhetoric than he. All the others — the Hunts, Richardson, John La Farge, Stanford White —



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

ragut across the avenue in Madison Square. It was a never-to-be-forgotten scene, an afternoon of bright sunshine in May (the year 1881); sailors grouped around the pedestal, cannon in the background; Joseph H. Choate, orator of the day, at his very best; and the flag falling to disclose the splendid bronze figure of the admiral, his feet apart and really standing on a deck — the greatest work of art that had been produced by an American, and that American our own dear friend. It established the reputation of Saint-Gaudens at once as the leading American sculptor, a reputation that was his through life and which is still his.

I contributed to the Saint-Gaudens "Reminiscences" a story which perhaps I may repeat here: Walking home one night from one of Gilder's Friday evenings with Mr. and Mrs. Saint-Gaudens soon after the unveiling of the Farragut statue, as we approached it we saw an elderly man, his hat

were exuberant; only Saint-Gaudens could never discuss or dilate on an emotion, or suggest artistic arguments for giving to his work the forms that he felt. He never laid down the law, or affected the despot, or became brutalized like Whistler by the brutalities of the world. He required no incense; he was no egoist; his simplicity of thought was excessive, he could not imitate, or give any form but his own to the creations of his hand. No one felt more strongly than he the strength of other men, but the idea that they could affect him never stirred an image in his mind. . . . In mere time he was a lost soul that had strayed by chance into the twentieth century . . . a child of Benvenuto Cellini, smothered in an American cradle."

## AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS

off, standing motionless in the moonlight, looking up at the figure.

"It's father," whispered Saint-Gaudens in surprise, for the old man had always been reluctant to notice his son's work.

"Why, father," he said, hoping for the long-deferred word of approval, "what are you doing here at this hour?"

"Oh, you go about your business! Have n't I a right to be here?" was the gruff response.

He kept a little shoe-shop on Fourth Avenue near by, where the Metropolitan Life Building stands to-day (and before that the Lyceum Theater), with the sign "*Cordonnier pour dames*" over the door, and he had come out in the night to see the work of his son, whose humble savings he had treasured so many years for the journey to the ateliers of Paris. But praise was another story.

It was a great privilege in later years to help Homer Saint-Gaudens plan the book of his father's reminiscences, and to be one of its publishers. As I write these lines the two young men, Homer and my son, are captains, fighting in France. Homer is in charge of a camouflage company, for which his inherited artistic ability and his stage experience with Charles Frohman especially fit him.

A close friend of Saint-Gaudens in the early New

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

York days was Joseph M. Wells, a young architect in the office of McKim, Mead & White, a man of striking ability and taste, who had been invited, just before his death, to join that famous firm. I remember once asking Mead what he himself did in it. "It takes all of my time keeping my partners from making damn fools of themselves," was the reply. There are drawbacks to genius.

Wells was the inspirer of the Sunday concerts, and after Saint-Gaudens was obliged to give up having the concerts regularly in his studio by reason of the trouble involved in making ready, he had one yearly in memory of Wells. Homer Saint-Gaudens, in his book of reminiscences, says that the Villard residence on Madison Avenue and the home of the Century Association in West Forty-third Street, were two of the many buildings which Wells designed.

When our company moved to Union Square, it was Wells who looked after the decorations. The richly carved mantel in the business office, bearing the company's seal, the open book on the palette, with the rays behind, was designed by Stanford White. Another mantel was the work of Allegra Eggleston, Dr. Eggleston's daughter; it was for Gilder's room, which was to have been Dr. Holland's, who died just as we were moving in. It



Augustus Saint Gaudens  
August 9<sup>th</sup>, no 11<sup>th</sup> 1903

A PORTRAIT SKETCH OF AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS MADE IN A  
VISITORS' BOOK

Note the "August 9th, no 11th"



## THE CENTURY OFFICES

became a memorial to Dr. Holland, a bas-relief of his face in the upper panel, surrounded with sprays of bitter-sweet, a memory of his most familiar poem.

With the benefit of Wells's taste, Stanford White to look in occasionally, and Drake always on the spot, the office became a thing of beauty of which the workers never tired and in which they were daily refreshed. Men are inclined to put all of their taste and money on the fittings of a home, but why not consider a little more the office or the shop where the owner as well as the wage-earner spends most of his waking time?

The cost of making The Century offices was not great — it was only a matter of planning generous spaces and putting the right color into the walls. The most interesting and the most cherished originals of the illustrations which had appeared in the magazines were hung everywhere, and changed from time to time. In the long corridor which led to the editorial rooms were the originals, in color, of many of the pictures which had beautified Sloane's "Napoleon."

From my desk near the front windows I have watched Gilder go down that corridor thousands of times, with his quick step, his head thrown a little forward, always bearing a bag of manu-



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

scripts; and Drake too, and Fraser, and Benjamin Smith of the Dictionary staff, for whom I had a great affection, and Mrs. Dodge, and others who did such good work in life and were so happy in it; — as Gilder once wrote of those who had gone, “all present if in love and honor.”

## CHAPTER XI

*Can novels be cheaper? — The cost of a book — Advertising books — Harold Bell Wright and some "best sellers" — How he does it — Publishers' troubles*

I WISH new novels could be published and sold for fifty cents, but I have never been able to see how it could be done. The present system in America is to charge usually a dollar thirty-five to a dollar and a half (often much more during and since the war), and then, if successful, after two years to bring it out at fifty cents (now seventy-five). In Continental Europe books are issued usually in the cheaper form first, but there public libraries are unknown, and if people want books at all they must buy them. Here an enormous number of people get all their reading from the libraries, and it is doubtful if the sale of the average new novel would be much more at fifty cents than it is at a dollar thirty-five, and unless it were many times as much it would not pay; the author would not be satisfied and the publisher could not pay his manufacturing and advertising bills.

The actual cost of making a book is really a very small part of what the buyer pays for it. Here are the figures (compiled since the war) of an average

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

novel, sold at \$1.50: the jobber, to whom many of the books are sold, and who supplies the trade, buys it at a discount of about forty per cent; that takes off sixty cents, leaving the publisher ninety cents. The jobber needs all of that forty per cent discount in his business. If the publisher spends ten cents a copy in advertising (and that is only five hundred dollars on a sale of five thousand copies or a thousand dollars on a sale of ten thousand) his receipts come down to eighty cents. The author may receive fifteen per cent of the retail price, though if his books are sure of a large sale, he gets twenty; but if fifteen, we'll deduct twenty-two and a half cents, fifteen per cent of one dollar fifty, for the author. This leaves the publisher fifty-seven and one half cents. The book costs him to manufacture, at present prices of paper, printing, and binding, about thirty cents. Now, he is down to twenty-seven and a half cents; the plates may cost five cents a copy — sometimes it is less and often it is much more. This leaves the publisher twenty-two and one half cents for himself; and out of this he must pay all of his general expenses, salaries, rents, insurance, bad debts, overhead charges of every kind; and what is left to him in the way of profit is usually much less than ten per cent on the retail price of the book. And that is only when it

## OLIVER HERFORD

is successful. In many cases the publisher makes nothing at all and sometimes publishes a book at a loss — but the author has always his royalty. If that royalty is twenty per cent, which is thirty cents on a dollar-fifty novel, the publisher can make a profit only if the book has a very large sale, which will reduce the cost per copy of plates, manufacture, and advertising. If he sells only three thousand copies he had better not have published the book at all — there may be a small profit on four thousand if one has not spent too much in advertising.

These figures may perhaps account for the fact that there is no such thing as a rich publisher. And that reminds me of Oliver Herford. He once asked a member of our firm for an increased royalty and a larger advance. Solemnly he was told of the great expenses connected with making a book — the plates, the advertising, the long wait for returns, etc. “Say no more,” interrupted Herford; “I relinquish all royalty and give up the advance — just let me have one share of the stock of your poor, unfortunate company.”

No one has ever found the sure way to advertise a book. The manufacturer of cotton cloth knows that scores of other factories are turning out cotton

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

cloth which no purchaser can tell from his, but the publisher of "Hugh Wynne" or "The Turmoil" is secure in the knowledge that no one else, thanks to copyright laws, can give the world those particular books. But how much can he afford to spend in pushing them? The manufacturer of soap or candles or breakfast food has a decided advantage in the matter of advertising; — he can think of the future — the publisher has only the present to consider. If a man likes a special kind of soap he will get another cake next month, and later his wife will order a box from the grocer, and his children will grow up and go out into the world and wash off its grime with that particular soap; but, alas for the maker of "Hugh Wynne" and "The Turmoil." Of each of these one cake will suffice. The reader of "Hugh Wynne" does n't go forth and buy another copy as soon as he has read the first; in fact, that is the last thing he does. He is through with "Hugh Wynne" forever, and he turns to another book, an entirely fresh one, probably born in the brain of another writer and turned out from the factory of another publisher. For he is not even impressed by the publisher's name (although one publisher is now seeking to impress him by advertising "These are —— books" — good luck to the experiment!); the reader does n't

## ADVERTISING BOOKS

say, as he lays down "Hugh Wynne," "Give me The Century Company's books or none," and, more's the pity, he may like his "Hugh Wynne" enough to lend it to a neighbor and that neighbor to another, and so on, each kindly lender killing a possible sale. A law making it obligatory to destroy every book after reading would help a publisher more than international copyright.

One great asset the publisher has, — virtually, alone of all manufacturers, — he creates a commodity that the newspapers will talk about. "Alas," says a friend of mine who makes collars, "why may I not send two hundred boxes of my latest collars to two hundred editors with the knowledge that each of them will give me from five inches to a column of free descriptive advertising as they give your books? Why will they not print the personal item that the inventor of my best shape in turnover fronts, two inches high in the back, will spend the summer camping on the Yukon?" And my collar friend says truly that the number of men who read new books is infinitesimal in comparison with those who put on a clean collar every morning, and like to try a new shape now and then.

There are a few "best sellers" in these days, but nothing in our time has equaled the success of the



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

novels of Harold Bell Wright and Gene Stratton Porter. Seven million of each author! Think of it! An article in a recent number of *The Bookman* contains an interview with Mr. Wright, and what he has to say will be a revelation to many authors. He tells just how the trick is turned.

In a big khaki-colored tent with celluloid windows, on an exposed headland, overlooking the valley which contains Tucson, Arizona, the works of Harold Bell Wright are created.

First he writes a complete "argument," the character of the book, its vital principles, destructive agencies, appeal of sex, motif of story, etc. He says the purpose of this novel ("When a Man's a Man" is on the ways) shall be "to arouse and foster the instinctive regard for the essential qualities or characteristics of manhood as such; to warn against the over-emphasis placed upon pursuits and achievements of a purely intellectual nature in so far as these pursuits and achievements ignore the distinctive character of manhood"; and so on. Mr. Wright admits that the argument is for himself and is not in the style he would have employed if he had intended it for the public.

No plot yet, no scenes, nothing but the argument, "the heart and soul of the novel." It may prove to be a sea-tale or a story of the plains. Mr.

## HAROLD BELL WRIGHT

Wright admits that the plains would probably win out, as he knows nothing of the sea. "Next come the characters, each one standing for some element or factor in the argument. Up to the last copying of 'The Eyes of the World,' not a character had been named. They were called in the copy, Greed, Ambition, Youth, or whatever they represented in the writing of the story."

Each character is given a history card, covering his life, "beginning before his birth" and running up to his appearance in the story. "Something in his history or nature must account for his every action in the story." The germ of the plot lies somewhere among these characters — it is not an inspiration but a logical growth. "The plot never is the reason for the story."

The plot assumes form as the writer gets acquainted with his created characters; the various persons, with their different ways and views, suggest the beginning of a still unformed plot; if incidents intrude he makes notes. Next comes the construction; he lays out four divisions, as he feels that every well-built novel must be divided into four parts. ("Our Mutual Friend" is in four parts — I think the only one of Dickens's novels so arranged.) Each division card leads its squad on a screen where he works on them. Construction

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

takes about three months, and for it he goes to the country where the scene is laid.

From a pack which held one hundred and fifty construction cards the author drew one. This is a copy of it:

A C 1

Patches Mystery of identity and history

“ Cowboy education

“ Question of relation to thieves

Time — Sept Oct Fall rodeo

13

Patches — Suspicion as thief begins

Results from Reed's general suspicion

“ “ Mystery of identity and history

Note — Reed against and Uncle Bill for Patches.

14

Patches } Friendship developing  
Phil }

Results from Patches proving his manhood

“ “ Patches regard for manhood

15

Kitty (Patches)

Interest in him developing

Results from Patches character (hints of city life)

“ “ Kitty's interest in city life

“ In Friendship of Patches and Kitty

The cards are written in various colored inks and pencils. “That gives emphasis to the different notes.” Mr. Wright then puts his cards on a great screen, about seven feet by seven, built of two

## HAROLD BELL WRIGHT

by four scantlings, covered with burlap; it holds ninety cards, six rows of fifteen each.

When the above card was written Mr. Wright was not sure of a single incident. The insertion of incidents is the stage now reached. He attaches the notes to the construction card with wire clips. Incidents have occurred to him; one may go in A D 2 or later be moved down to C A 4. He subjects them to acid tests as to intrinsic interest, value as to carrying on the theme, accord with the plot, in keeping with the characters. Sometimes he has enough incidents left over to fill another novel. No text is written yet.

"Then when the construction work is done," he says, "I turn to and write the thing. It is easy then. . . . That's all there is to writing a novel."

If I have not reported this with sufficient fullness to enable the reader to prepare his argument, arrange his cards, and write a novel, he can find complete directions in *The Bookman* for July, 1918. It would be advisable to consult it because it is not unlikely that the present writer in his efforts at condensation has omitted some important detail, the carrying-out of which is essential lest the whole structure fall to the ground. "'You're nothing but a pack of cards!' said Alice."

Surely Harold Bell Wright has found the secret

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

of constructing a novel which vast numbers of his fellow men and women can enjoy, while no professor of English literature can stand having one in his house. It is said that a certain confirmed *littérateur* once took a copy away from his cook and burned it in the stove before her eyes. He brought her "Tom Jones," and "Clarissa Harlowe." "For God's sake, read something with meat on its bones!"

But publishers think that the business management of Harold Bell Wright's books has had as much to do with their success as the burlap screen and the cards. The head of the house which issues these (and no other) novels believes that Mr. Wright's works interest a greater number of American people than the works of any other writer; that is, that Mr. Wright is the high apostle of the commonplace, and that the aggressive purity of his output is bound to satisfy the taste for sentimentalism to a degree that is unsurpassed by any author, living or dead. The publisher has backed Mr. Wright as no writer has been backed before. He has printed hundreds of thousands of copies before issue, beginning to talk in loud tones a year in advance of the unprecedented size of the edition which he is about to bring forth, taking costly advertising pages in the periodicals, spending, it is

## BEST SELLERS

said, a hundred thousand dollars before the book appears — ah, what a greasing of the ways is that! A first edition of 250,000 copies of one book will be surpassed by 500,000 of the next and overwhelmed by 750,000 of a third. Jobbers buy in lots of 50,000 and 100,000. An expectant world is waiting, and bang! comes one of the immortal works in four divisions, every character typifying a human trait, each incident tending in the right direction, virtue triumphant, vice under foot. “Come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out.” That ending of “Vanity Fair” always has saddened me, for never was there a book whose characters seemed less like puppets. Perhaps it could be more appropriately used by Mr. Wright.

All the profits of the dollar-fifty edition are sometimes spent in advertising, the publisher being well satisfied with what accrues from the tremendous after sales of the reprint at a lower price.

Authors should follow Mr. Wright in one particular and keep to a single publisher, not placing their books around with different houses simply because they can get a little more advance or a trifle larger royalty. If several publishers have a writer's books, no one publisher is interested in



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

that writer *per se*. The publisher wants the writer and all his works, not simply a passing book.

And authors are sometimes on the watch against what they believe to be a publisher's prejudice against their particular book. They can't find a copy in local bookstores or there are none to be seen on the railway news-stands. Every publisher does what he can to sell every book on his list, but his salesmen cannot always make a dealer purchase them. That dealer may have had too many, perhaps, of an author's previous book and so decline to take any risks on another. The people who manage railway bookstalls want only quick-sellers, and they are apt to want these "on sale," that is, not to be paid for unless sold, and older publishers have found from experience that "on sale" books often come back in such shape that it is impossible to offer them again without rebinding, and that the profit on five hundred books sold does not make up for the loss on two thousand returned. The author would like the five hundred sold because on these he gets a royalty, and he has no interest whatever in the two thousand returned. But the publisher must do the best he can for his business and for the author in the long run. Trust him; if you cannot trust him, get another; but as long as you stay with him, believe in him.

## PUBLISHERS' TROUBLES

The publisher has his troubles. Here is a letter from a man in Colorado, who was not satisfied with the treatment which his mining town received in *The Century Cyclopedia of Names*:

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May 4, 1895

THE CENTURY CO.

MESSIEURS:

Some time ago one of your agents unloaded your *Cyclopedia of Names* on me with the assurance that it was a way up and modern publication. I have received the book and don't agree with him, for the reason that while such Jim Crow and tin-horn towns as Abilene, Kansas, and Grinnell, Iowa, are mentioned in the work I fail to find any reference to this city or district of ——. Consequently I am disgust with the book and although have put up \$2.00 to bind the sale would as soon let that go and not own such a book which is so lacking as to omit any reference to this city or district. Now then for the benefit of your compiler I want to say for the information of his jags that the city and mining district of —— are located on the —— slope of ——. Four years ago the population was about *ten*. To-day the souls inhabiting the *city* of —— number at least *ten thousand* and in the entire district there are at least twenty thousand souls not counting about five hundred coyotes in human shape who are in the chattel mortgage business and consequently don't trot in the soul's class.

The Rio Grande and Santa Fe roads are completed into the camp and his jags is further informed that as a slight indication of the importance of this camp as a wealth producer that one mine known as the ——, and

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

it is dam well named, produced over half a million dollars profit for the four months just gone for the lucky cuss who owns it to wit, old man ——, who has just gone in a special Pullman to California. Then the —— is producing at the rate of a million a year. Recollect this is a gold camp strictly and produces no silver and I don't see why the hell your statistick prospector omitted to mention the great camp of —— which lies on the —— side of —— and not on the —— side of the range which was prospected by suckers for forty years.

It strikes me as dam curious that this camp which will positively produce more gold in 1895 than can be produced in all California should get lost in the shuffle by your compiler. You may doubt these figures but if you do it will be because you are not posted. No I don't want the book since it don't mention —— and your agent can take the \$2.00 as his rake-off and take his little book back.

I am sorry to have to do this because have always considered your house a good one but am compelled to say that in my honest opinion your compiler is not well onto his job, in fact he aint worth a dam. Let me hear from you by return mail what you propose to do about it.

Yours sincerely

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It was quite true that the name of the town was not in the first edition of the book, but as that edition had been planned and set up several years before, and as the man himself had said that "four years ago the population was about ten," our editors did not take the criticism seriously to heart.

## PUBLISHERS' TROUBLES

All letters which come to publishers are not as clear and convincing as the last. The following, not written by a "Babu" as one might imagine, but signed with an Irish name, was filed with "applications for positions," though it is not at all certain that it belongs there:

— *East* — *Street, New York*  
*August 1st, 1911*

THE CENTURY CO.

GENTLEMEN:

I find myself gripped with so exceptional a propensity to master an authentic method of converting psychological summary to prosaic material.

In consequence I venture to solicit your kind interest in probable prospect of securing a humble capacity in an initiative view of eventual mingling and associated interest in the finished article or data.

Twenty-three of age, a Christian, and student of mental evolution, non-hyperbolic or playing, and concentrative in the ultra.

I am,

Hopefully,  
JOHN O'—

## CHAPTER XII

*"Discovering" authors — Alice Hegan Rice — "Frances Little" — Editors' and publishers' mistakes — Mr. Alden and Amélie Rives — George Ripley and "Ben Hur" — "David Harum" — Mary E. Wilkins — Dr. Mitchell and "Hugh Wynne" — Winston Churchill — Paul Leicester Ford — Charles D. Stewart*

It is always pleasant to "discover" an author. Joseph B. Gilder, when in charge of our book department, "discovered" Alice Hegan, afterward Mrs. Alice Hegan Rice and her book, "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch." Douglas Z. Doty, when in the same position in later years, "discovered" Jean Webster.

"Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" had been declined by one publisher because he considered that its thirty-five thousand words were not enough to make a book, but, thanks to Mr. Joseph Gilder, we believed in it and took it, and by reason of its size published it at one dollar, and "Mrs. Wiggs" became the first of a series of dollar books, which afterward included "The Lady of the Decoration," "Uncle William," "Daddy Long-Legs," "Molly-Make-Believe," and other notable successes. I remember when Miss Hegan called at the office to make the acquaintance of the publishers

## ALICE HEGAN RICE

who had just accepted her little manuscript. She told us of her interest in work among the needy in her home city of Louisville, and how "Mrs. Wiggs" had grown out of her own experiences.

In September, 1901, the book was issued in a modest edition of 2000 copies. The next month 2000 more were printed, and twice in December it became necessary to print editions of 2000 each. Then a surprising thing happened; in January, a month which publishers devote usually to counting up how many books they did n't sell in the previous year — in January it became necessary to print 5000, in February 10,000, and other ten thousands in March, April, and May, and 30,000 in August, and from September to January, 95,000 more. And the year after was still better — oh, "Mrs. Wiggs" was a joy to its publishers! Its cheerful message has been translated into French and German and Dutch, into Swedish and Danish and Japanese, and has been put into type for the blind. A very successful play was made of it, with half a dozen companies on the road, and the author herself, traveling in India, after a Christmas morning on the Ganges, looked up to see on a bill-board the announcement that "Mrs. Wiggs," played by an English company, would be the feature of the Benares theater that evening.



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

“The Lady of the Decoration,” written by “Frances Little” (Mrs. Macauley), a relative of Mrs. Rice, was another success. We had the feeling that perhaps because it was written in the form of letters it might not take with the public, and we feared that the missionaries would not like its allusions to them. But we could n’t supply the missionary boards fast enough, and we printed it over and over again. Books written in the form of letters will take if they are clever enough; “The Lady of the Decoration” was followed long after by two very popular books made up of letters, “Daddy Long-Legs” and “Dear Enemy,” by Jean Webster of beloved memory.

Jean Webster was a daughter of Charles L. Webster the publisher, Mark Twain’s nephew. She was a Vassar girl and her first stories were stories of Vassar life. Mr. Doty helped her to arrange the stories in “When Patty Went to College,” suggesting that they be rewritten in places, helped her as so many editors and publishers have helped authors with a first book and often with others. From the beginning all of her books of this class have been very successful. Jean Webster was a woman of great charm and earnestness, desirous of doing good work, always faithful to her publishers. One of my most cherished possessions is her photo-



To William Webster Ellsworth,  
my favorite publisher!  
Fran Webster.

September 6.  
1915.



## JEAN WEBSTER

graph, with "To my favorite publisher" written beneath it. The interest which Jean Webster (Mrs. Glenn Ford McKinney) took in orphaned children, begun by her studies for "Daddy Long-Legs," made her an expert on the subject and she had many plans for helping them when death took her, and she gave her life for a little child.

Editors and publishers make mistakes. I have already spoken of Gilder's declining what many consider Richard Harding Davis's best story, "Gallegher." In "The House of Harper" there is printed a letter which Mr. Alden, editor of Harper's Magazine, once wrote to Amélie Rives telling her of his regret in having declined a story of hers when he came to read it in another magazine, and he said it was one of only two such cases in his experience, the other a story by Rose Terry Cooke. "The editorial habit," Mr. Alden went on, "leads to over-caution. In nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand the caution is wise. An editor too readily reasons from precedents, and when the unprecedented is presented to his mind he is likely at first to be bewildered." A few years ago, he said, "Blackmore's 'Lorna Doone' presented a somewhat similar case. It at first so bewildered criticism that a long time elapsed before it was ap-

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

preciated in England or thought worthy of reprinting in America. Now it is recognized as the greatest romance of modern literature, standing entirely alone." And, it may be added, only the marriage of the Princess Louise and the Marquis of Lorne started the book at all. The English public associated its name with that of the much-talked-of marquis, and it began to sell. The wrath of the author, Blackmore, over this roundabout appreciation is still a classic in the annals of authorship.

It is interesting to go back and see what a publisher's reader had to say about a book that later became a very great success. George Ripley, than whom there was no more highly esteemed critic, read the manuscript of "Ben Hur" and reported on it to Harper & Bros. Mr. Ripley said: "It is a bold, imaginative experiment. . . . I do not regard it, either in the selection of theme or the style of execution, as belonging to classical or even legitimate literature, and if it were the production of a new and unknown writer *I could not bring myself to recommend its publication*. But with the prestige of the author and his really uncommon gifts of invention and illustration, together with the features of popular interest that would give it a wonderful fascination among the multitude of readers, I think it might be well to accept the manuscript."

## BEST SELLERS

And "Ben Hur" has sold somewhere around two million copies. The play which was made from it had been presented 5446 times up to December, 1916, when it was temporarily withdrawn, and, in its seventeen years, more than eleven million people had paid into the box office seven and a half million dollars to see it. But if the manuscript of "Ben Hur" had been sent in by a new author it would have had hard sledding. Surely the new author who has had a book declined may take heart from this.<sup>1</sup>

As is well known "David Harum" was offered to half a dozen publishers (I am glad to say that The Century Company was not one of them; I should hate to have had such a seller as "David Harum" slip through our fingers) before Ripley Hitchcock, the Appletons' literary adviser, saw something in it. Hitchcock told me that the manuscript was nearly a foot high when it came to him.

<sup>1</sup> When we were making The Century Cyclopedia of Names I wrote to General Lew Wallace to ask about his name, whether it was Lew or Lewis. Here is his answer:

*Crawfordsville, Ind.*

*July 6, '95*

DEAR SIR:

You are right. My name is Lewis, tho' *Lew.*, being an abbreviation or nickname derived from school associates, is continued for convenience.

Respectfully

LEW WALLACE

MR. ELLSWORTH



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

“David Harum” was its author’s first book and very badly constructed; David, the only real character in it, did not enter until the story was far along. Hitchcock took the horse story out of the middle and made it chapter one, and the reader was interested from the first. It is sad to think that “David Harum,” tremendous seller that it was, did not appear in the author’s lifetime.

A good editor or a good publisher ought to be suggestive and able sometimes to give authors ideas that are valuable. I remember long ago reading in a Sunday Tribune a paragraph which seemed to me just made for a story by Miss Mary E. Wilkins (now Mrs. Freeman). I sent it to her. It told of a mother and daughter who came to New York, put up at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and the daughter gave the clerk a thousand dollars, telling him to let her know when it was nearly exhausted by board and bills. The two ladies had a wonderful shopping season, buying clothes and jewelry galore, and the clerk happened to let the account go until more than the thousand had been spent. Then when he asked the girl to put up more money, she broke down and wept. She had no more — the thousand dollars was insurance money which had been paid on her father’s death. She had never had a good time in her life, nor spent any money, and

## MARY E. WILKINS

she had persuaded her mother to carry out this one grand carouse. The hotel had to send them back to Vermont.

Miss Wilkins was very grateful; she made a fine story out of it — and sent it, by the way, to another magazine. It appeared under the title “One Good Time.” She built up the life in Vermont before the father’s death, his meanness, the daily toil, the final determination. Not much space was given to the New York trip, presumably true.

Months after I heard again from Miss Wilkins. Visiting New York she had called at the Fifth Avenue Hotel to learn more particulars, only to find that the original story was entirely the fabrication of a reporter, without any basis of fact whatever. So I had unconsciously put Miss Wilkins into the position of using another person’s imagined plot! Her gratitude undoubtedly waned, but she was very polite about it.

Dr. Mitchell very kindly regarded me as the “discoverer” of “Hugh Wynne,” but I was not exactly that. He sent a résumé of the story to Gilder, suggesting its consideration as a serial; but Gilder read no more than the résumé; he had engaged a serial for the coming year and could not use “Hugh Wynne.” Two other editors had the same chance and turned it down. We were the pub-

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

lishers of Dr. Mitchell's books and as "Hugh Wynne" was not to be serialized, the manuscript was sent to the manufacturing department, set up and five thousand copies of the book printed. By some strange accident nobody read it. There had been a good deal of talk about it in the office, and the business department supposed the magazine editors had read it.

Going to the country one Saturday afternoon in the summer I took with me a set of the sheets of "Hugh Wynne," then on its way to the bindery. I shall never forget my sensation that Saturday and Sunday. The joy of a publisher's or an editor's life is discovery. I went back to New York Monday morning wild-eyed and excited. "Fellows, we've got the best novel of the American Revolution that ever was written." Gilder read it, they all read it, and we arranged to carry over the serial that we had engaged and "Hugh Wynne" took its place. The five thousand copies that we had printed were boxed up and put away, and when we came to issue a year later we needed at least twenty thousand more to fill the advance orders. If any one has the idea that serial publication may injure the sale of a book, let him know that serial publication is a very great help to a good book — and a quick and painless death to a poor one.

## DR. S. WEIR MITCHELL

In the days of "Hugh Wynne" and of "Janice Meredith" there was great interest in American history, especially the history of the American Revolution, and these books satisfied that interest. The only other book by Dr. Mitchell which approached the sale of "Hugh Wynne" was "The Red City," also historical. Dr. Mitchell was not what publishers call a great "seller," but in all, up to January, 1913, nearly five hundred thousand copies of his novels had been sold, about one quarter of the whole being "Hugh Wynne."

A few weeks after the publication of that book a man called at the office bringing a copy of a novel entitled, "The Quaker Soldier," written, as I remember, by Judge Zollicoffer of Philadelphia, and published between 1850 and 1860, asking us if we did not think Dr. Mitchell had taken the idea of his story from that book. The plot bore some resemblance to that of "Hugh Wynne" — the hero was an officer on Washington's staff and he had a cousin in the British army, and there was a somewhat similar love interest (as I remember the book at this distance). But Dr. Mitchell said that he had never heard of "The Quaker Soldier." I thought at the time that it was not impossible that Dr. Mitchell had read the book, perhaps in his boyhood, and that the memory of the plot had been laid away in

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

some corner of his brain and forgotten until such time as he began work on "Hugh Wynne," when unconsciously he used a shadow of it supposing that it was all his own. But it may have been merely a coincidence.

One way of pushing a book is by letting people know that there are characters in it which have a special interest for them. As I recall the number, there were twenty-eight Philadelphia families represented in "Hugh Wynne" by ancestors living in Revolutionary days, and we did what we could to let the many more than twenty-eight descendants know of this. The book lent itself, too, to extra illustration, the insertion of portraits, contemporaneous prints and manuscripts, and we issued a hundred copies of a large-paper edition for collectors.

Dr. Mitchell was a hard worker, writing a great number of authoritative medical books as well as novels. Of the latter he might have produced more had not his fellow physician, Dr. Holmes, long ago advised him to give up trying to do anything outside of his own profession — advice which kept him back for many years. He asked a good price for prose, never taking money for a poem — poetry, he said, was too near his heart. He worked at his profession all winter, taking a month off in June





DR. S. WEIR MITCHELL AT MOUNT DESERT





## DR. S. WEIR MITCHELL

for salmon fishing in Canada (one recalls the monsters of the deep which used to arrive, packed in ice, at the office in Dr. Mitchell's fishing season), then gave the summer to writing at his home in Bar Harbor. Like some other wise men he believed that the best vacation was a change of work.

For some unknown reason if a person wins fame in any other walk of life and writes besides, he is apt to be regarded as an "amateur" author. I never knew just why. Dr. Mitchell was no more an amateur in authorship than he was in medicine. Of course no author goes through the same well-marked preparation that a physician or a lawyer must go through, but he learns by writing — which is the way Hawthorne and Stevenson and Kipling learned. Between the issue of Dr. Mitchell's first book, "Researches upon the Venom of the Rattlesnake," and his last, "Westways," there was a span of fifty-three years, and in that time Dr. Mitchell, starting with a rare gift, acquired and perfected a wonderfully clear, forcible, and always charming style. In his novels there is oftentimes pathological information that lends a seriousness of purpose to their fictional form, but it is because of their imaginative virility, their poetic moulding of material fact into poetic vision and romantic atmosphere that they will live in Ameri-

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

can literature. His chapter on the death of André in "Hugh Wynne" and the Gettysburg chapter in "Westways" are well-nigh classics.

Dr. Mitchell was an unusually careful and conscientious writer, not only going over his manuscript with great care, but having every book set up in type at his own expense and made up into pages, before formally turning it over to his publishers for their resetting.

I remember his last call at our office on his way from Bar Harbor to Philadelphia. "Have you written much this summer, Dr. Mitchell?" He was over eighty then. "No, nothing at all. Oh, yes, I forgot. I wrote a five-thousand-line poem, 'Barabbas.'" He was a good story-teller, and he enjoyed telling of his experience with the great Paris nerve-specialist, Charcot. Calling on Charcot he sent in his card, but it happened to be overlooked, so Dr. Mitchell took his place with the patients, and when he entered Charcot's consulting-room he thought he would pretend he was one of them. "I have palsy," he said, showing a pair of rather trembling hands. "Ah," said Charcot; "smoke much?" "Some." "Drink, I suppose, and play whist till all hours?" "Well, I sometimes take a glass of Madeira with my dinner, and I am fond of whist." "Where are you from?" "Philadelphia."

## WINSTON CHURCHILL

“What! and why do you come to me?” “Why not?” “Because Mitchell lives in Philadelphia. Why did n’t you go to him?” “Oh, I think Mitchell is a good deal of a fakir.” “Nonsense, sir, he is the greatest one of all of us. Who are you, anyway?” “My card is there on your table.” So Charcot picks up the card — “Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, Philadelphia.” Then came explanations, embraces, red fire, curtain.

A very successful historical novel was Winston Churchill’s “Richard Carvel” which passed four hundred thousand copies. I saw a good deal of Churchill later when he was writing a then unnamed novel which became “The Inside of the Cup.” He was enthralled over his book, thinking of nothing else, and by correspondence with men who could contribute something from their own experiences, seeking conscientiously for light on the great religious problem which he was trying to solve. Churchill is never able to begin the publication of a serial until his book is finished, for he always finds it necessary to rewrite his opening chapters.

Another successful novel of the American Revolution was Paul Leicester Ford’s “Janice Meredith,” whose sale ran up to three hundred thousand. Ford’s mother and my father were own cousins,

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

both grandchildren of Noah Webster, whom they remembered, but who died before I was born. When I went to New York as a young man, Paul's father, Gordon L. Ford, and his wife were very kind to me, having me often for Sunday dinner in their big sunny home on Brooklyn Heights, overlooking the bay and the ferries. There was no bridge then. In after years, reading Ernest Poole's fine story, "The Harbor," I was reminded of the Ford home. Mr. Ford was the publisher of the New York Tribune, in days when it was known as the "Try-bune" and Horace Greeley edited it; and he was a famous collector of books, autograph letters, and especially of pamphlets bearing upon American history. Dealers knew that he would pay a cent for every pamphlet brought him, no matter how great the number, and when he died he owned hundreds of thousands of them, many turning out to be of considerable value. The library in his house was an immense room, the bookcases running to the ceiling, and there on my first Sunday visit I saw little Paul, a lad of ten and a cripple from early childhood, standing high on a ladder, reading. In that atmosphere of American history the future author of "Janice Meredith" and "The Honorable Peter Sterling" grew up.

## CHARLES D. STEWART

It was in 1904 that one of those rare literary surprises came into our office in the shape of the manuscript of a book entitled "The Fugitive Blacksmith," the work of an unknown writer, Charles D. Stewart, of Chicago, a first book, and we considered it a work of genius. We published it in February, 1905, and I went to Chicago to be there when the book was issued, for we had planned an advertising campaign to center in the author's home — we reasoned that his fellow authors of Chicago would be interested and so would the newspapers. I found the home of Stewart, two or three rooms over a corner grocery in a part of the city with which I was not familiar. He was out walking; it was five o'clock, and his wife said he would be back at six. I walked, too, and calling an hour later Stewart himself came to the door, clad in undershirt and trousers, shaving. A good clean intellectual face he had. I went in, supped with the two, and talked over the table for four hours. My host knew a little of everything, and a great deal of many things. He had been a photo-engraver, also a walking delegate in charge of a strike; he had done what the Fugitive Blacksmith had done; he had tramped and ridden and rowed and steamed down through the middle of America with the result that he had written an Odyssey of the Mississippi



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

River. In his second book, "Partners of Providence," he utilized his experience on the river itself, and the book has always seemed to me a companion volume to Mark Twain's "Life on the Mississippi." When "Partners of Providence" came out I sent a copy to Mark Twain, but he never acknowledged it or spoke of it.

When I called upon Stewart he did not know a literary person in Chicago or a newspaper man. Here was a writer who had created the greatest book that had come out of that city in years, a city which prided itself on its appreciation of literature and art, absolutely unknown to any of the elect who met in "The Little Room" and tried out their wares on each other. Nor did he want to know them; he was a man of the people, and the people were the companions he chose.

I have a large package of letters of appreciation of "The Fugitive Blacksmith," remarkable letters they are — from Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Agnes Repplier, George Cary Eggleston, Professor Henry A. Beers, Henry van Dyke, John Hay, Joel Chandler Harris, John Kendrick Bangs, Robert Grant, Thomas E. Watson, and others.

There was a character "Finerty" in the book, who kept the sandhouse. Stewart knew of a real Finerty working on a railroad in Texas and we sent

## CHARLES D. STEWART

him a copy. (And perhaps he *was* the real Finerty — I never knew.) He wrote to us:

In reading the story I was like the other Finerty, very interested. I would forget all about Finerty until he would butt in. It will entertain any one who enjoys good reading. It is comical. The Blacksmith is true to life — as I have passed through a good many of his experiences.

Stewart came to visit me in New York, and I have never been more impressed by criticism of our buildings than I was by his. He had never been east of Buffalo before. He hit at once on a fault of our Public Library — too light a stone, foolish to use it in a smoky city; and his comparison of the Tiffany Building with the Gorham Building and its fine façade on the side street, the two diagonally across from each other, gave the Gorham Building the preference. I remembered that Mead, of McKim, Mead & White, architects of both buildings, had told me, when they were under construction, that artists would prefer the Gorham Building, and the untutored but discerning Charles D. Stewart agreed with them.

We spent nearly the whole of one night walking over Riverside Drive and the Grant's Tomb-Columbia district. When we were tired we sat down on the cold stone behind the Alma Mater statue at

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

the top of the Columbia Library steps, and talked on. A night-watchman would come around occasionally, and although he was suspicious at first it wore off as our harmlessness became more and more evident with the passing hours.

Stewart later became interested in the cruxes of Shakespeare, and he wrote a book in which he made clear more of the puzzling passages in that author than any one man had uncovered in years.

## CHAPTER XIII

*The De Vinne Press — The Century Dictionary*

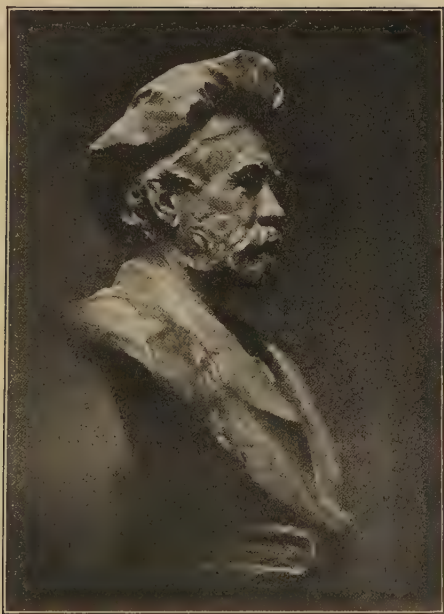
ROSWELL SMITH was always attracted by the right kind of men; the fact that a printing house or a paper house was a very great concern, doing an immense business, did not draw him as he was drawn by a man in whom he saw the ability to turn a small business into a larger one. He met and liked Theodore Low De Vinne (the name is pronounced in two syllables, Vin-ne), at that time a partner in the old firm of Francis Hart & Co., makers of blank-books. None of its members had ever printed a wood-cut in their lives, nor did they know anything about any other kind of business than the ruling and printing of ledgers and journals. And yet Roswell Smith, with that strange prescience that he often showed, picked Theodore Low De Vinne and gave him the chance to become the foremost printer in the world — and he became it! Mr. De Vinne began with St. Nicholas, and here on my desk is a little sheet of blue paper, 5 x 8, containing, in the handwriting of Mr. De Vinne, an estimate for printing the first number of that magazine: "Probable cost of 50,000 copies of

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

a pamphlet of 48 pages, composition, alteration, press work, folding, stitching, etc.”

St. Nicholas was his very first job of that kind, but just as soon as he learned how to print it, Mr. Smith gave him the chance to print Scribner's Monthly, and with that Mr. De Vinne started on a career which brought him to the very top of his profession and made him an accepted authority in two continents on the art of wood-cut printing. Roswell Smith made out of a blank-book manufacturer an expert who wrote “A History of Wood-Cut Printing” and many books on typography and composition, and collections of rules which are used for the guidance of printers the world over. A popular type was named for him, “De Vinne,” though it should be said that Mr. De Vinne was not in any way responsible for it. Several fonts of notably artistic types were prepared under his supervision, and one of them was used for a time as the body-type of *The Century Magazine*, but was discarded after it became evident that the public was too accustomed to more commonplace fashions.

Mr. De Vinne would take any amount of pains to make his work perfect. Under him was perfected the system of overlaying and underlaying wood-cuts, pasting bits of paper on the back in as many



FROM THE BRONZE BUST BY  
CHESTER BEACH  
A TESTIMONIAL TO MR. DE VINNE BY THE  
UNITED TYPOGRAPHS OF AMERICA  
AND PERSONAL FRIENDS

Yours cordially  
Thos. L. D. 2<sup>nd</sup> time





## THEODORE L. DE VINNE

thicknesses as were necessary to bring up the parts that were sunken or were not thick enough. A costly press would stand idle for many days while this work was being done; a job that could be run off in three days would sometimes take five to prepare. The supervision which Drake gave daily to this part of the work helped immensely to make it perfect. He was unfailing in his patience and in his kindness; pressmen would do anything for him, and Mr. De Vinne backed him in every suggestion. No detail was too small for Drake's eye and thought. When the press would begin to run after the labor of days during the making-ready, he would stand over it watching its product as a mother watches her baby's first steps, and De Vinne, Drake, and pressmen would rejoice together as some particularly finely engraved Cole block would begin to throw off its rich, dark impressions, serene, beautiful, multiplying in thousands and thousands of copies, to be a joy forever in appreciative homes.

The art of printing, which Theodore L. De Vinne himself learned by printing The Century Company's publications, was carried further by him than by any other printer of his day. The most beautiful books that came from any press, including the issues of the Grolier Club, were products

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

of the De Vinne Press during the years that he and Roswell Smith and Mr. Smith's immediate successors took an interest in the work.

At the time that the firm name was changed from Francis Hart & Co., Mr. De Vinne desired to honor the man who had given him his great opportunity by naming the press after him, calling it "The Roswell Smith Press" or "The Century Press," but this Mr. Smith would not think of, and he insisted that Mr. De Vinne's own name should be used. He felt that the De Vinne name was one which could be associated for generations with the work Mr. De Vinne had founded. But he had no such feeling about his own name in connection with his own business; when the name of Scribner & Co. was changed, the younger men desired and every one supposed that Roswell Smith, who at that time owned nearly all of the stock, would give the company his own name, but not so; he believed he was founding a company in which men would some day labor who did not know the founder and that they would do better work under an impersonal name. But Mr. De Vinne had a son to carry on his business, and later a grandson. Mr. Smith had no son.

Mr. De Vinne insisted on putting the inscription "Printers to The Century Co." on the building

## THE CENTURY DICTIONARY

which he and Roswell Smith built together for the use of the press. The architects were Babb, Cook & Willard; the result of their work stands at the corner of Lafayette and Fourth Streets, and it is a triumph of good taste. Its solidity makes it possible to put heavy machinery on any floor.

Mr. De Vinne contributed largely to the beauty of the page of *The Century Dictionary*, though several men of our office force had a hand in it, especially Drake and Chichester. New type was made and an immense quantity of it ordered, it being necessary to keep many pages in type at the same time for galley proofs and page proofs which were read in so many different stages by a great number of editors.

It was Dr. Holland's suggestion, made long before, that some time the company should create and publish a great reference book; an encyclopedia was what he had in mind. As a beginning the right to publish Ogilvie's *Imperial Dictionary* was bought for America. Already Mr. Smith had failed to purchase an interest in an American dictionary which was found to be not for sale. The plates of the *Imperial* should be Americanized, preference being given to American spellings over English, as "honor" for "honour," but the work had not gone far when it was seen that the result would be a

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

hodge-podge. Then greater changes were planned, the whole dictionary should be made over; then the idea of using the Imperial except for a word-list was abandoned (and later the Imperial was not used even for that). It was decided to create an entirely new dictionary of the English language, more complete than any other, its definitions to be encyclopedic in their scope. Professor William Dwight Whitney of Yale was invited to be editor-in-chief, and the services of Benjamin Eli Smith, a graduate of Amherst and at that time an instructor in psychology at Johns Hopkins, were secured as managing-editor. These two men proved to be absolutely ideal. Professor Whitney was a thorough student in the science of words. Benjamin Smith was an all-round scholar and a wonderful executive — Frank Stockton could have written a story about him and called it “The Harmonizer of Experts.” Later Benjamin Smith became editor-in-chief of *The Cyclopedia of Names* and of the *Atlas*.

An office force was secured, and the best specialists in the world who were fitted for the task were asked to take charge of the different departments. Soon five hundred people were reading for uses of words and quotations, and an enterprise was launched which took ten years to complete, and,

## THE CENTURY DICTIONARY

with *The Century Cyclopedia of Names* and the *Atlas* which followed it, cost \$987,000; while subsequent revisions and additions brought the total expenditure to a million and a quarter. And yet it had not been planned at first as a great project at all, but had gone on from the smallest beginnings to result in what is unquestionably the greatest of American literary achievements. In France, Spain, and other continental countries such works are owned and paid for by the nation, or are under university authority. In England, Oxford University publishes the Philological Society's great dictionary, and Cambridge is held responsible for the *Britannica*. Here private capital and enterprise did it all.

During the years that the dictionary was in the making *The Century Magazine*, with its *War Series*, *Lincoln Life*, and *Kennan's Siberia*, was so successful that it was never necessary to borrow a dollar from the banks to pay the increasing yearly dictionary bills, and good dividends always were made to the stockholders from the yearly surplus profits. The dictionary cost about \$100,000 a year — less at first, more when the manuscript was being put into type.

Is it strange that Roswell Smith felt that the God who watched over his enterprises had put into



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

the minds of his staff the ideas which blossomed into dollars and paid the dictionary bills?

The work of illustrating *The Century Dictionary* was given to William Lewis Fraser, Drake's companion in the Art Department, and on his shoulders fell the task of ordering and passing upon the thousands of cuts used in the book — a delicate piece of work when one realizes that each drawing must be absolutely correct, that too much "art" must not be apparent in a reference book, that the editors (and especially the expert in charge of the particular department) must be satisfied, and that one department should not be over-illustrated at the expense of another — and that each expert had no interest whatever in any other department, but simply wanted all the pictures he could get for his own definitions.

Owners of interesting or unique objects, personal friends of Mr. Fraser or of others on the force, were called upon for contributions. The writer had brought home from Egypt some good scarabs, one of which he was wearing as a scarf-pin. Fraser requisitioned it for an illustration of "cartouche," as it had a particularly clear cutting. Lending that scarf-pin for a dictionary illustration has been an indirect source of great joy to the owner. The manner of obtaining the joy is to let the scarf-pin be

## THE CENTURY DICTIONARY

seen by some one who knows a good deal about Egyptology, then to lead up to "cartouche" and to display an ignorance of the subject by expressing the idea that presumably all scarabs bear the same cartouche. The dispensing of knowledge is a human attribute that few can resist. "Nonsense," readily falls the Egyptologist, "they are the names of different kings and the casual traveler hardly ever in a lifetime sees two alike." "Why, I had the idea that this cartouche was just like the one in the dictionary." More "nonsense" — sometimes followed by a small bet — comparison of the pin and the dictionary cut. The same, to a hair! Utter discomfiture of the learned one, who, however, is not suffered to remain long in ignorance of the reason for the coincidence.

A serious matter in connection with the publication of a great reference book is the fact that the information must be changed from time to time as new words and new meanings come into the language. In the case of a book like *The Century Cyclopædia of Names*, a great war will bring to the fore the names of many generals never before heard of, places will be made famous that were practically unknown — many changes in plates must be made after every upheaval of the world. A new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* will last for hardly a

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

single generation, and then it must be rewritten and reset. Great business acumen is needed to make such an enormously expensive work successful in its comparatively short life. The happy thought of using India paper for the latest edition of the *Britannica* has been responsible for more sales than the contents of the book — such an easily understood and quickly appreciated novelty as it was. Printing *The Century Dictionary* on India paper was tried long ago, but at that time the paper was too soft and would not take cuts.

A criticism of *The Century Dictionary* was once brought to my attention under interesting circumstances. I was staying with George Kennan at Baddeck, Nova Scotia, at the time that announcement was made of Dr. Cook's alleged discovery of the North Pole. It will be remembered that Peary arrived in this country a few days after that announcement, and Kennan and I decided to go to Sidney, near by, and meet Peary when he landed. With forty newspaper correspondents, we sat around the little Sidney hotel for nearly a week, until the good ship *Roosevelt*, weather-beaten and ice-torn, came in, bringing Peary and his band, the commander himself considerably incensed over the possibility of losing his right to the discovery of the Pole by the claims of a cheap adventurer.

## THE CENTURY DICTIONARY

In talking with Captain Bartlett one day, I said: "I wish Peary had n't sent some of those dispatches — they were n't worded very well — especially the one which said that Cook had 'handed the American people a gold brick!' Could n't he have found a better expression?" "Your fault," said Bartlett, "your fault and that of The Century Dictionary which we had with us. The commander gave me that dispatch and asked me to read it and tell him what I thought of it, and then take it personally to the wireless station. I told him I did n't like 'gold brick.' 'Very well, look it up in The Century Dictionary, and see if you can find a good synonym.' And I could n't. No, sir, there was no 'gold brick' in the dictionary at all, and we had to let it go. Don't blame us."

Looking this up I find the term in the supplement published since, but it was not in the original edition. Many interesting things about dictionaries were unearthed while the office was engaged on The Century. A definition of the word "banana" in another dictionary greatly amused the force. After the ordinary definition this was added: "In the opinion of the writer the banana is the finest fruit there is." The dear man — he liked bananas and did not care who knew it!

A noted expert in what may be called "long-

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

forgotten lore” offered his services to the management of *The Cyclopedia of Names* when work on it was beginning. He was refused. He then “lay low” till the book appeared, and after studying it evidently with a microscope for a few weeks, he offered to sell us the knowledge of some hundreds of small errors in his specialty. The editors, unwarned, had used an obsolete authority. His perfectly fair price was met, and plate changes were made immediately, which seems a much more mutually agreeable way of settling such a matter, in which the public benefits, than to have the finder of errors print a book about them as was done in the case of another great work of reference not long ago.

## CHAPTER XIV

### *Old-time humor*

WHY is it that our standard of humor changes almost with each generation? Try a girl or boy of high-school age on Artemus Ward or the works of John Phoenix and see what happens. The youth of to-day do not find as much to laugh at in "The Innocents Abroad" as we found when it first burst upon a conventional world; "The Dodge Club," by James De Mille, was very funny to me once, but it is funny no longer — nor have the young people of to-day so much as heard of it. Are they reading the Essays of the gentle Elia? How we enjoyed the quips and cranks of the breezy Gail Hamilton; now we prefer the more subtle, self-contained touch of Agnes Repplier.

Did your father read Petroleum V. Nasby's letters written while postmaster at "Confederit X Roads wich is in the stait of Kentucky," which so amused Lincoln? Did you ever hear read aloud when you were a child the sonorous paragraphs of "The New Gospel of Peace, according to St. Benjamin" (Park Benjamin, I believe)? It was written in the phraseology of the Bible, a form which was



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

considered highly humorous especially in epistolary correspondence. There was an older cousin of mine to whom, as a boy, I used to write reams of Bible letters. Here is an extract from such a letter, written by the Gail Hamilton to whom I have referred. She was a sister of Mrs. James G. Blaine, her real name Mary Abigail Dodge. Evidently the publishers had tried to send her some magazines, but succeeded only in reaching her with a letter advising her of the gift. This was her answer:

I suppose I must say to you as the Lord said unto David my father, whereas it was in thine heart to send me the November number and the bound volume of St. Nicholas, thou didst well that it was in thine heart. Nevertheless thou didst not send it, neither thou nor thy father, etc.

All that is amusing about this now is that anybody should do it. But Miss Dodge could write letters that would be enjoyed to-day. Witness this, to one of our editors:

I came through New York on the flying artillery. And besides I don't think I should have courage to venture into the lion's den anyway. I am afraid of New York, and you must first come to Hamilton or Washington and let me see how formidable you are. But on the whole is it not more comfortable for us to remain personally unknown? Fancy how awkward you would feel to be forced to come down to the breakfast table

## JOSH BILLINGS

and say to a guest, "Miss Dodge, your paper is very heavy and would sink the magazine if I should be so stupid as to print it."

Abraham Lincoln's stories were amusing and always pat as he told them to the men who gathered about him in the White House in the days of the Civil War, but we could hardly imagine Woodrow Wilson telling such stories to-day or finding an interested listener if he did. We are no longer amused by the spelling "2 mutch"; we turn from it in disgust. If a new Josh Billings should print "A Essa on the Muel" we could not read it. But our fathers could — and did, after the author had printed the same matter in proper spelling in "An Essay on the Mule" and found no readers at all.

Dr. Holland liked the work of "Josh Billings," but not his spelling, and when editor of Scribner's he engaged Mr. Shaw to contribute his aphorisms to the magazine under the heading "Uncle Esek's Wisdom," properly spelled. To the owner of the font of wisdom "Josh Billings" or "Uncle Esek" as pen-names were equally satisfactory and an editor could have any spelling that pleased him.

From an old file of Scribner's Monthly one may sample "Uncle Esek" as follows:

Common sense is the gift of heaven; enough of it is genius.

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

We owe one half of our success in this world to some circumstance, and the other half to taking the circumstance on the wing.

These little aphorisms came to us about forty at a time, each one written in pencil on a separate slip of paper. They were chunks of real wisdom too.

When Mr. Shaw made aphorisms under the name of "Josh Billings" they read like these:

Kontentment can be cultivated a little, but it is hard to acquire.

Silence never makes any blunders, and alwus gits as much credit as is due it, and oftimes more.

Artemus Ward was more pronounced in his misspellings:

She clung to me and sed "you air my Affinerty!"

"What upon airth is that?" I shouted.

"Dost thou not know?"

"No, I dostent!"

This is from Artemus Ward's "Among the Free Lovers," one of the many sketches with which he fought the windmills of his day — Mormons, Shakers, Suffragists, "Secesh," and such.

Doubtless if "Josh Billings" and Artemus Ward, Q. K. Philander Doesticks, Orpheus C. Kerr, and the rest were alive to-day they would long ago have changed their fashion in humor and we might be enjoying them as our elders enjoyed them in the

## THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

sixties. Mark Twain changed his manner repeatedly. From "The Innocents Abroad" to "The Prince and the Pauper" is a long jump, and still longer to "Joan of Arc."

Artemus Ward was writing when I was very young, and as I grew old enough I read his works with joy and gladness. I never saw him, nor do I remember seeing "Josh Billings," who must have been often in our office.

I was a very small boy when one day I found a treasure in a box in the harness-room of my grandfather's barn. It was a copy of "The Life of P. T. Barnum, by Himself," a book absolutely unlike any I had read hitherto (under guidance). It bore no relation to "The Swiss Family Robinson" or to the Rollo Books which I knew so well. It was more like the Arabian Nights, but its rollicking humor made that classic look like the Book of Job. In fact it was so funny that I had the feeling, probably a correct one, that never in the world would I be allowed to read it, so "The Life of P. T. Barnum, by Himself," became a stolen sweet for barn consumption only. It was a "first edition." I have seen copies of Barnum's "Life" in later years, but it had been much "refined" — gone was the record of those practical jokes which had so charmed my childhood.

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

The people of Danbury, Connecticut, according to that book, must have been divided into two classes, the jokers and the butts. Everybody was one or the other. The town must have laughed from the time it got up in the morning, to find its walks and steps made slippery or covered with tar, until it went to bed at night and fell through the mattress onto the floor.

As an indication of how styles in jokes change with the years, I would like to relate one story from that book which has stayed always with me — the only one — and which seemed at the age of nine the very funniest thing that ever happened in the world.

A party of Danbury men started for New York, happy in the fact that they were dwellers in a dreamland situated on the very banks of the Tigris; — never could Haroun-al-Rashid have beheld more wonders in his nightly walks than came under the eye of the Danbury watchman with every set of sun. These men elected a strange mode of conveyance, by rail to the shore, by schooner the rest of the way to New York. They were to arrive early Sunday morning, but schooners are proverbially late; the morning was well advanced before the city lay before them. And they must be shaven before they could walk up Broadway in a

## THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

crowd of church-goers. One man had a razor. He would lend it, or, better, he was a barber and would shave them. But there might not be time; it was manifestly unfair to shave some and not all. A happy thought, he would shave one half of each man's face and if there were time, then the other half. Those simple Danbury souls, who should have known that there was a joke lurking somewhere, agreed to this Arabian Nights' proposition. One half of every face shaved, the barber walked to the rail to strop his razor — when overboard it went.

Then came the march up Broadway. To my youthful imagination those men had half of the beard of an East-Side rabbi, and were clean-shaven on the other side, a spectacle that would have shaken to the core those Broadway church-goers. As I grew older I realized that men would hardly make a spectacle of themselves with a half-beard of a few days' growth, and Mr. Barnum's humor rather palled. But how could any grown-up person have failed to see the fault in it? Was Mr. Barnum catering only to the very young?

Later the city of Danbury produced Mr. James M. Bailey, known as "The Danbury News man," perhaps the first of the writers of short, humorous newspaper paragraphs, continued later by the



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

Detroit Free Press and other papers, and still to be found in the Yonkers Statesman.

A few weeks ago while on a lecture tour I was at Burlington, Iowa, and coming out of the hall in the evening I saw flaming against the sky, in electric lights, the word "Hawk-Eye." The Burlington Hawk-Eye! It was one of the best of the funny papers of my boyhood; I had not heard or seen its name for years.

John Kendrick Bangs has been a long-time friend. I lived in Yonkers when he ran for mayor of that city, and being beaten he had a chance to write what was probably a more entertaining story of his experiences as a candidate than it is likely he could have written of an actual mayoralty.

Bill Nye was a sweet-natured, kindly humorist, with a delightful twist to his fun. He could tell stories on the platform to crowded audiences, or gather a few children around him, as he gathered mine one night in their nursery, — I remember them standing wide-eyed, in their red-flannel nightgowns, — while he filled them full of the delights and the mystery of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves."

I have in my file a letter from Bill Nye, replying to an invitation to an Aldine Club party. It is writ-

## BILL NYE

ten from Arden, North Carolina, where he went to live on account of the climate — which he used to say he had to hang a blanket up over the door to keep out. I had asked him to be with us on the evening of November 1, 1895. This was his answer:

I am professionally in Brooklyn October 31st, but the manager has not yet told me where I'll be on the 1st. That at present is between him and his God.

I hope to see you before that, however, and tell you more definitely.

Yours sincerely

EDGAR W. NYE

I had a dear friend, another gentle humorist (one cannot imagine a fierce humorist), who was most systematic in the placing of the outcome of his brain. He had a list of thirty periodicals any one of which might take, and most of them at some time had taken, his productions, and he opened an account with them, just as George Washington opened an account with every man with whom he played cards. After breakfast and the postman's call, my friend sat down to the practical work of the day. *Opus 212* had been returned by periodical No. 17. All traces of No. 17's marks were at once removed, the manuscript rewrapped and mailed to No. 18. *Opus 305* had been accepted by No. 2. Good. He told me that once or twice he had sent a

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

manuscript to the entire list — and it was borne in on him that when it had been turned down by thirty editors there was something the matter with it. He was as sensitive as that. So he rewrote it — and began again with No. 1. His capital was brains and postage stamps — they went hand in hand, each worthless without the other. His average earnings were three thousand dollars a year.

I wonder if other people have the prejudice I have against a new humorist. I must be “shown” and it takes time. He is trying to break into a very intimate part of me, almost sacred. I loved the men who were wont to play there; will this new-comer be a fit comrade? I felt so about Irvin Cobb, and then he wrote “Boys Will be Boys” and I took him in and fed him and gave him a place to sleep.

## CHAPTER XV

Mark Twain — *The Grant "Memoirs"* — Nicolay and Hay's  
"Lincoln"

I KNEW Mark Twain very slightly in Hartford, for I was young and he was even then a great literary personage. He seemed a young man when he came to Hartford to live in 1871, but he had been a writer, with a tremendously growing reputation, for twenty years. It was in 1851 (my own parents had not even met at the time) that he did his first literary work, editing his brother Orion's paper in Hannibal during the editor's absence, and astonishing the natives with his brilliant and novel journalistic features including "To Mary in H—l."

His "Celebrated Jumping Frog" came out in book form in 1867, and my old friend, George W. Carleton,<sup>1</sup> with whom I have spent so many happy

<sup>1</sup> Carleton was himself a good deal of a humorist. I learned two things from him which I have never forgotten:

(1) If any one asks if you have been to a certain place in Europe, no matter where, always say you have. Otherwise you are in danger of this: is . . .

"Have you ever visited Lake Innisgraben?"

"Innisgraben"? No, where is it?"

"What! You have never been to *Innisgraben*? It's in the Austrian Tyrol — the smallest lake in the world, only thirteen feet long and eight feet wide. Wonderful! Why, man, you" — and so on.

(2) If you are asked the name of a star, "oblige" at once. There

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

hours swapping stories under the trees of the place where I am writing these lines, was a prominent New York publisher at the time, issuing the works of Artemus Ward and other American humorists. One of his stories was that Mark Twain came into his store and offered him the manuscript of "The Jumping Frog" and that he declined it "because the author looked so disreputable."

Perhaps the string tie and the careless dress gave Mark Twain the appearance of an outlander to Carleton, typical New Yorker that he was; and the breezy Western independence, without any subserviency in it, the drawl and the lazy air helped, but Bret Harte thus described Mark Twain in his own first impression: "His head was striking. He had the curly hair, the aquiline nose, and even the aquiline eye — an eye so eagle-like that a second lid would not have surprised me — of an unusual and dominant nature. His eyebrows were thick and bushy. His dress was careless, and his general manner one of supreme indifference to surroundings and circumstances."

We had an amateur dramatic company in Hartford, of which I became a member, and Mark is nothing about the star calculated to undeceive the questioner. Name it for him — Sirius, Jupiter, Belshazzar — anything. It satisfies, and the next time your friend meets the star he will have forgotten the name anyway.

Jan 13/93

My Dear Ellsworth:

It is the most variegated  
& extraordinary explosion  
of advertising I have en-  
countered in my lifetime.

Yes, & the most ingenious &  
seductive & beguiling, too  
— for it made me go & get  
the article & read it myself,  
it so inflamed my curiosity  
to know what it was all about.  
When advertising can achieve  
that effect, it has struck the  
very sum in it it seems to me.

I haven't read the rest of  
my works, but would like to  
— so, some time I will get  
you to advertise them, too

Please give my love to  
all the Century & St. Nicholas  
friends.

Ever sincerely yours  
S. L. Clemens  
— 2

A LETTER FROM MARK TWAIN

The reference is to the advertising, the posters, "flyers," newspaper copy, etc., planned for his story "The Million-Pound Bank Note."





## MARK TWAIN

Twain acted with it once. April 26, 1876, is the date of his first appearance on the dramatic stage. He took the part of the gardener, Peter Spyk, in the "Loan of a Lover," and the lady I afterwards married was Gertrude. Unfortunately I had no part in the play — unfortunately is a word I can use looking back upon it now, but at the time those of us who were not in the "Loan of a Lover" counted ourselves as fortunate, for our star developed, early in the performance, a propensity to go on with his talk after the other person's cue came. He would put in lines, which, while very funny to those on the other side of the footlights, were decidedly embarrassing to his fellow actors. At one point I remember he began to tell the audience about the tin roof which he had just put on an ell of his new house and rambled on for a while, ending up that particular gag by asking Gertrude, very much to her embarrassment, if she had ever put a tin roof on *her* house.

Mark Twain was an actor — there was no doubt of that — and Augustin Daly wanted the company to appear under New York limelights, but its members were too modest.

It was about the time of the "Loan of a Lover" that Mark Twain helped fifteen or twenty of the young girls of Hartford to start the Saturday

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Morning Club, its object general cultivation; and he would persuade distinguished friends to stop off in Hartford or stay over a Saturday morning to speak to these girls. On alternate Saturdays they read papers and had discussions, and the club has gone on to this day, some of its leading members the children of those who began it. Before long grandchildren will be eligible. My wife was one of the original members, and she had an advantage over the other girls, for she could call the distinguished founder by a first name, "Peter." Mark Twain often read to the club extracts from work on which he was engaged, and so they heard a part of "The Prince and the Pauper," which he began in 1877 and laid aside for several years. When I went to New York in 1878 I told Mrs. Dodge, the editor of St. Nicholas, about this beautiful story, suggesting that she should try to get it for a serial for her magazine, but I think that Mrs. Dodge felt a little afraid of Mark Twain then as a writer for children. Later she was glad enough to print anything that he would send her and St. Nicholas had as a serial in 1892 "Tom Sawyer Abroad." The magazine recently serialized Paine's splendid "Boy's Life of Mark Twain."

Mrs. Clemens had a great influence on her husband and she often persuaded him to modify some

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of his expressions and at times she kept him from publishing what he had written. It is said that only once did she fail, and that was when Mark Twain attacked the missionaries. She begged him with tears in her eyes not to publish the manuscript, but he would do it.

Mark Twain had such a vivid imagination, such a brain for embroidery, that it was difficult for him to tell a straight story just as it happened — he could make up one that was so much better. We all know that Albert Bigelow Paine, working on the Mark Twain "Life," found it necessary to discard much of the autobiographic material that Mark Twain had written, including his articles in the *North American Review*. Investigation, talks with men still living who knew the facts, simply proved that the tales were not so. And Mark Twain was no liar. He had a glorious, an almost super-human, imagination. As he approached threescore and ten he said, as quoted in the "Life," "When I was younger I could remember anything, whether it happened or not; but I am getting old, and soon I shall remember only the latter."

Just after the appearance of a book of reminiscences by Major Pond, the lecture manager, I happened to call on Mark Twain. It was Sunday afternoon; he was lying in his big, carved mahogany

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bed, surrounded with books and cigars, a beautiful figure with his great towering mass of white hair, his keen dark eyes and overhanging brows, his plain white nightshirt. No pajamas for Mark Twain; he always wore in bed an old-fashioned, unembroidered, long white nightshirt. And he spent many of his days in bed, resting. I told him he would be interested in Major Pond's book, there was a good deal about their trip across the continent in it. Yes, he would read it, "but the great trouble with Pond is," he said in his drawling voice, "that he is always wanting to lecture. Why, when we started across the continent together on my lecture tour around the world, I heard that Pond was proposing to give his lecture on Beecher, Sunday night in the churches, and I just put my foot down. 'Now, see here, Major, I'm the lecturer in this show, and I don't propose to have my manager open his mouth in public while we are together.' But I had n't more than sailed out of Vancouver harbor, one Sunday afternoon, before Pond was at it in a Vancouver church.

"But wait till I tell you what happened in London. I had got around the world and my debts were n't all paid either, and I was sitting before my hotel fire one morning when I walked Pond and made me an offer of fifty thousand dollars for one

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hundred and twenty-five nights in America. Well, that was something of a temptation, and I said to him, 'I'll have to talk with Mrs. Clemens. If she'll let me perhaps I'll do it. Come in to-morrow morning at this time and I'll let you know.' I talked to Mrs. Clemens all night," he told me. "'You'll have pneumonia,' she said. 'I'll go with you, the girls'll go with you, we'll all die.' And it was four o'clock in the morning before she gave in. At eleven I was sitting over the fire waiting for Pond; I even had the outline of a contract drawn up on the table. But he did n't come; he did n't come in the afternoon. By evening I would n't have gone to America with Pond if he'd offered me the United States Treasury. He came in the next day. 'Well, where have you been?' He'd been visiting Dean Hole at Rochester. 'And why did n't you come back yesterday?' 'Well, the Dean wanted me to lecture to his people; of course it took a little time to get them together, and I stayed over another night and gave my lecture. Splendid audience! Wonderful visit!' And then I opened on the major and the trip was off forever."

For years I told that story as a joke on Major Pond. A few months ago I happened on two old letters from the major, written to me that summer while he was in England dickering with Mark



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Twain over the American tour. There was no lecture. Mark had telegraphed the major in the country asking him to come back to London and talk more about it, but the major replied he had made his best offer and would not see him again. Finally, although Mark Twain wanted to go, Mrs. Clemens refused to let him! All of which was most uninteresting in comparison with the story I had heard that Sunday afternoon. At the author's market rates it would have been worth five hundred dollars, and I had had it all to myself. True? perhaps not; — but Mark thought it was while he was telling it.

Mark Twain was not often a practical joker, but I have heard of an instance when he is said to have successfully worked a joke and incidentally brought together two good men. Ex-Speaker Thomas B. Reed and Mark Twain were on a train approaching New York, and Reed asked his companion if he could direct him to some small, quiet hotel where he would not be bothered. "Why, surely, the Hotel Gilder is the place for you." "Hotel Gilder? and where is that?" "Just behind the Brevoort House on Clinton Place — very small, very quiet — does n't take in everybody. Just ring the bell and tell them what you want; if there is any trouble, ask to see the proprietor, tell him who you are and that I sent you."

## MARK TWAIN

And so it happened. And when the "proprietor," Mr. Richard Watson Gilder, came downstairs and found out who the guest was who so persistently wanted a room in his house, and who had sent him, it is not unlikely that the laughter could have been heard as far as Mark Twain's home which was around the corner and a block up Fifth Avenue. Reed stayed, and the statesman and the editor began a friendship which lasted through their lives.

One felt in talking to Mark Twain that he was more than a man, that he was a *force*. He never talked with you that he did not say something worth while, nor wrote a letter that did not have an original thought in it.

When his story "The Million-Pound Bank Note" was published in *The Century*, we got up some very good advertising of it, imitation English bank-notes, posters, etc. We were cheered by the following letter:

*Villa Viviani,  
Settignano (Florence)  
Jan. 13/93*

MY DEAR ELLSWORTH:

It is the most variegated and extraordinary explosion of advertising I have encountered in my lifetime. Yes, and the most ingenious and seductive and beguiling, too — for it made me go and get the article and read it myself, it so inflamed my curiosity to know what it was

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all about. When advertising can achieve that effect, it has struck the very summit, it seems to me.

I have n't read the rest of my works, but would like to — so some time I will get you to advertise them, too.

Please give my love to all the Century and St. Nicholas friends.

Sincerely yours,

S. L. CLEMENS

In conversation Mark Twain would avail himself of any words that came to him, sacred or profane. I have heard him give utterance to marvelously original thoughts, clad in the verbiage of many different centuries. He would sometimes write to Will Carey from Europe a letter that would make one's hair stand on end with its pre-Shakespearean humor, asking Carey to show it to — of all pure souls — Gilder. I remember once he added, "and if Gilder does n't care to use the idea send it over to Bok for *The Ladies' Home Journal*."

If he was ever profane he would use his profanity in such an absolutely unique way that no recording angel would have had the heart to set it down.

The story of the loss to The Century Company of the publication of Grant's "Memoirs" and its acquisition by Mark Twain's firm, Charles L. Web-

## GENERAL GRANT'S MEMOIRS

ster & Co., is told in detail and with great exactness by Albert Bigelow Paine in his "supreme" biography of Mark Twain. I have read that biography more than once. It seems to me a faultless piece of work; the construction, and the division into chapters of uneven length but completely covering the subject, have not been surpassed in book-making. Boswell made, I suppose, a very wonderful record of Dr. Johnson's sayings, — page after page after page of talk, with every "sir" set down, — but Paine made a great story, a masterpiece of biography. Mark Twain himself would be — is — proud of it.

I was, of course, a junior in the days when General Grant wrote his memoirs, and I had nothing to do with him directly. Once as he was standing in the corridor, his throat covered with a muffler, his face drawn and grim, Mr. Roswell Smith presented me. The general could at that time hardly speak at all. I harked back in my mind to boyhood days when I was interested in collecting autographs. I wrote to all the emperors and kings of the earth. I wrote to the Pope, I wrote to anybody of any eminence whatever. No emperor or king or pope ever answered, but after writing four times to General Grant I added a postscript to the next letter: "This is the fifth time I have written to you for

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

your autograph. I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer." By return mail he sent me five cards each with his name written thereon.

The memoirs, as is well known, grew out of the writing which General Grant agreed to do for The Century War Series. He was to contribute four articles. The series came from the historic suggestion of Clarence Clough Buel, assistant editor of the magazine, that an article in hand on the John Brown Raid at Harper's Ferry, written "by a Virginian who witnessed the fight," should be accompanied by an article covering the Northern point of view. In the paper by the Virginian (Alexander R. Boteler) there was mention of an article in The Atlantic for April, 1875, by the well-known Abolitionist Frank B. Sanborn. So Mr. Sanborn was asked to follow Mr. Boteler, and his paper appeared as "Comment by a Radical Abolitionist," both of them in The Century for July, 1883.

It was in June that this number of The Century appeared, and on the 17th of July Mr. Buel proposed that the idea should be followed up and articles obtained from the living Federal and Confederate leaders, describing the important movements and battles of the Civil War. The men were alive, now was the time. Suppose Napoleon and Wellington had been asked to write their accounts



## THE CENTURY WAR SERIES

of Waterloo; could any contributions to history be more valuable? At first not more than a dozen subjects were planned, but the scheme grew until every living general and many officers of lower rank and some civilians had been asked to contribute to a series, which, when completed, did more to bring together North and South than anything that had happened since they were torn apart in 1861. Incidentally the series increased the circulation of *The Century* from 127,000 monthly to 225,000.

Mr. Gilder, editor-in-chief, placed the execution in the hands of Robert Underwood Johnson, associate editor, and Buel, assistant editor. The series formally began in the number for November, 1884, with General Beauregard's account of the Confederate side of the battle of Bull Run, and Warren Lee Goss's entertaining "Recollections of a Private," covering the same battle as seen from the Union ranks. In February, 1885, appeared General Grant's first article, "The Battle of Shiloh," and from that time the great success of the series was assured. It continued for two years, when the articles and pictures, with nearly as many more added to complete and round out the history, were issued in four great volumes, "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War." The sale reached 75,000 sets, and the book sold at \$20 and \$30, according to binding.



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

In planning their work Johnson and Buel divided up the possible writers, Johnson taking Grant, while to Buel was assigned the leading Confederate general then living, Joseph E. Johnston. At first, General Grant would not consider the proposal; he felt that he was not a writer, he was resting from the labors of a busy life, with plenty of money and troops of friends. Everything had come to him; why risk his reputation by putting on paper his record in the battles long past? But then suddenly the financial blow fell, through the failure of Grant & Ward, and conditions were changed; the money was a consideration.

The question of a book came up at once, suggested by Johnson. I remember when Roswell Smith and Johnson together went to see General Grant at Long Branch, in the summer of 1884, and discussed the book. When the general returned to his city home Mr. Roswell Smith supposed the final arrangements were about to be made. It was in November, 1884, — Paine tells the story in his biography, — that George W. Cable and Mark Twain gave a reading at the old Chickering Hall, which stood at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Eighteenth Street. Coming out, Mark Twain overheard Gilder tell a friend that General Grant had decided to write his memoirs. Three years before

## GENERAL GRANT'S MEMOIRS

Mark Twain had proposed this very thing to General Grant, as no doubt others had proposed it — for any one interested in writing would be quite apt to suggest that Grant should set down in his lifetime the story of his part in the Civil War. But now Mark Twain, backing his nephew Charles L. Webster, had become a publisher. To his keen business sense such a book made an instant appeal, and as he stood there in the doorway of Chickering Hall, the rain pouring off the rim of his umbrella, he resolved to be the publisher of Grant's "Memoirs." For was not the book his own suggestion?

In many ways no one could be more wide awake than Roswell Smith, yet it has never seemed to me that he quite grasped the greatness of that book. Magazines had been his specialty, the company had published very few books. The successful "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War" was then in the future. In his mind he classed Grant's life with other "lives of great men" which he was trying to secure. He did get a "Life" of William Lloyd Garrison and a "Life" of Samuel Bowles, and I really believe that he considered Grant's "Life" almost as a companion volume to these; perhaps expecting a little more in sales, but he did not see in it the tremendous success which Mark Twain saw at once. Smith wrote to Gilder telling him of

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

the interview at Long Branch and saying that General Grant's ideas agreed with his — "to make a good book, manufacture it handsomely, sell it at a reasonable price, and make it so commanding that we can secure competent agents at a fair commission." And Mr. Smith added: "When the book is ready he (General Grant) is to come to us with it."

The Century Company's contract with General Grant had been drawn up when Mark Twain stepped in and secured the prize. I did not know or I do not recall the royalty proposed by Roswell Smith, but I imagine that it was twenty per cent. Mark Twain offered either twenty per cent gross royalty or seventy per cent of the net profit, and offered to write his check for twenty-five thousand dollars on account of advance royalties on the first volume and to add a like amount for each future volume. When the contract was signed he handed General Grant a check for ten thousand dollars. The general hesitated a long time before signing. He felt that The Century Company was the rightful publisher — Mark Twain may have suggested the book, but The Century Company made him write it, and it was only when his old friend George W. Childs of Philadelphia joined with Colonel Fred Grant in urging him to sign the Mark Twain contract that he hesitatingly agreed.

## GENERAL GRANT'S MEMOIRS

Mark Twain's notebook, under date of March, 1885, contains the following memorandum, quoted by Paine in the "Biography":

Roswell Smith said to me, "I'm glad you got the book, Mr. Clemens, glad there was somebody with courage enough to take it under the circumstances. What do you think the general wanted to require of me?"

"What?"

"He wanted me to insure a sale of twenty-five thousand sets of his book. I would n't risk such a guarantee on any book that was ever published."

Looking backward I have always felt that it was well for General Grant's family that Mark Twain's proposition was accepted. The Century Company had not been long in the book field, and I believe that the Webster firm handled the matter in a larger way than Roswell Smith would have done. Webster at once sent for the best subscription men in the country, told them exactly what was expected of them, and received pledges guaranteeing a sale of a quarter of a million sets long before publication.

The Webster firm paid Mrs. Grant between four hundred and twenty and four hundred and fifty thousand dollars in royalties. Hanging on the wall of The Players for years was one of the royalty checks: "Pay to the order of Mrs. Julia D. Grant Two Hundred Thousand Dollars. Chas. L. Web-

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

ster & Co.” It is said to be the largest royalty check in existence.

It should be borne in mind that when Roswell Smith first talked with General Grant about the book, the general was not the pathetic figure, watched in sorrow by the whole world, that he became at the end. Appreciation of the great possibilities of his “Memoirs” was a slow matter. But slow or fast it reached Mark Twain before it reached Roswell Smith. And too there was “publicity” in the fact that the famous humorist Mark Twain had first suggested to General Grant the writing of his “Memoirs,” of which he would be publisher. The Century Company’s announcement would have been flat by comparison.

In spite of all that the family made out of the book, Colonel Fred Grant told me not long before his death that he had figured out that they would have been better off if The Century Company had published it. I think he reached this conclusion from the fact that our offer was (presumably) a royalty of twenty per cent, which would have been one dollar and a half a copy on a seven-dollar-and-a-half book, and my impression is that the Webster firm finally paid a round dollar per copy royalty. But Colonel Grant had not considered whether we could have sold as many copies, nor



## GENERAL GRANT'S MEMOIRS

whether our price would have been seven dollars and a half. I doubt if Mr. Smith meant to charge as much.

A few years later (1894) the Webster firm, which had issued other books including a "Life" of the Pope on which they had not been able to make good, failed, and the plates of the Grant "Memoirs" came to us. Of course the great sale had been over long before.

It was this failure that threw upon the shoulders of Mark Twain at sixty years of age an indebtedness of \$93,000, a sum which he cheerfully started to earn by a lecture tour of the world. Most of his creditors, perhaps all, would gladly have forgiven the debt, but he paid it to the last penny.

There never was any feeling in our office against Mark Twain for taking away the Grant book. He continued to write for *The Century* and for *St. Nicholas* and he was on the best of terms with every one about the place.

Roswell Smith had no hesitation in making an unprecedented offer of money if it seemed best to do so in order to secure a feature of very great value to the world. As the War Series in *The Century* was drawing to a close, the only thing in sight that was worth while to follow it was Nicolay and Hay's "Life" of Abraham Lincoln. For years editors and



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

publishers had known that Lincoln's two secretaries were working on it and many of them had tried to get it. I once found a letter from John Hay to Dr. Holland, written before 1880, telling him that the work was not then ready for consideration. Dr. Holland wrote to Gilder at this time that "the Hay history is probably impracticable. It is too long and elaborate." When it was done serious competition had come down to one other house besides ourselves, and then it was that during an interview with Messrs. Nicolay and Hay in Roswell Smith's office he made them the offer of fifty thousand dollars for serial publication in *The Century* — the greatest sum that had been paid for a serial up to that time, and I do not know of any such sum paid later — possibly Mr. Roosevelt received as much for his African articles in *Scribner's Magazine*, but as to that I do not know.

Before the offer was made Messrs. Nicolay and Hay had not been favorably disposed to consider serial publication at all, for they feared that editors would wish to cut a book of more than a million words and print only the cream. But fifty thousand dollars was a great sum. They could not refuse it. And our editors arranged to do some cutting, for the magazine had so fully covered the history of the Civil War in the War Series that it was

## NICOLAY AND HAY'S LINCOLN

not necessary to include that part of the Lincoln "Life" and it was condensed. Not many writers are pleased with a "condensation" of their work and John Hay was no exception, as is indicated in Thayer's "Life." What was printed ran from November, 1886, until February, 1890, more than three years, and held the new readers who had been first attracted to The Century by the War papers.

Roswell Smith would not guarantee General Grant a sale of twenty-five thousand copies of his book — that was merely a matter of dollars and cents, but he would pay for a Lincoln "Life," which he believed to be the greatest "Life" of the greatest American that had been or could be written, the largest sum that had ever been paid for a serial — a sum which many people thought at the time was absurd. As for what was considered his lack of business foresight in losing the book publication of the Grant "Memoirs," he once told Gilder that he felt himself unfitted for book-publishing, that he had no love for the detail necessary to putting forth each individual book — he loved to plan largely, nor was making money ever a prime object with him. When he created The Century Dictionary he felt confident that if he made the greatest and best dictionary possible, the money would come back; that is, if he considered the

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money question at all, that would be the way his mind would work. In the case of General Grant's book a member of his house had thought of it, he himself had helped to persuade the general to write it, and that meant more to him than making money out of its publication. And he did not see it as money, he saw a new Cæsar's Commentaries, a great classic which he had helped to inspire. I know there are plenty of men in the world who could not understand this, who would smile out of a corner of their mouths and call Roswell Smith a fool; — but I thank God that Roswell Smith left enough poetry in me to let me honor him always, both for what he did and for what he left undone.

## CHAPTER XVI

*Dinners at the Aldine Club — Conan Doyle — Henry M. Stanley —  
Marion Crawford — Oliver Herford — Theodore Roosevelt — The  
English Winston Churchill — Major Pond — Lectures*

IT was Mark Twain who called my attention to the fact that Hamilton W. Mabie was the best presiding officer at a dinner he had ever seen. We were going home from a banquet which had been given in Mark Twain's honor at the Aldine Club (December 4, 1900). Mabie had presided, introducing the speakers most happily, although Mark Twain himself had received the cue to his own speech from the decorations and the remarkable atmosphere which our Drake had created. In those days Drake's taste and tireless work made many notable dinners more notable. All the pillars in the room that night were made to look like trees, with branches growing out of them; and from the branches and from the ceiling drooped Southern moss sent up from Florida. Ship's lanterns of gleaming brass, choice bits of Drake's collection, hung, red-eyed, in the distance. Mark Twain sat in a pilot-house, made exactly like a Mississippi River pilot-house, except that it was open at the front and sides. On a half-circle sign above it was

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lettered the name of a steamboat which our guest had piloted, and before him, on the table, was half of a helmsman's wheel. He was much touched by the tribute, and when he spoke he gave us whole chapters out of "Life on the Mississippi" which came back to him in those surroundings.

I remember some of the other speakers who met to honor Mark Twain that night: William Dean Howells, Hopkinson Smith, Marion Crawford, Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, James Lane Allen, Winston Churchill, and Brander Matthews among them. At the guest table sat one man who was somewhat of a stranger to New York dinners, Owen Wister of Philadelphia. Mark Twain had sent me a letter from Wister to him saying that he wanted to go and see Mark Twain and telling him that there was "no living American of which I'm quite so proud as I am of you. I promise not to say this when I see you." The letter bears Mark Twain's endorsement: "Dear Ellsworth: If you need another guest don't overlook Wister. S. L. C." I am sure Wister must have enjoyed that wonderful night.

The menu had on it portraits of Mark Twain made at various times in his life, chiefly early portraits, some of them furnished by Mrs. Clemens, who took infinite pains to find them for us.

I have often attended public dinners where the

## THE ALDINE CLUB

guest of the evening seemed to do all the work, but in those Aldine dinners, with Mabie to preside and Drake to decorate, the hosts did their share to make the entertainment a success. It was understood that Mabie should not be called on for preliminary work; the guests usually were invited by Robert Bridges, now editor of Scribner's Magazine (he was once the delightful book critic, "Droch," of Life), and by me.

The Aldine Club began in 1889, chiefly as a luncheon place for editors, artists, and publishers whose daily work brought them into the neighborhood of what was then Lafayette "Place"; and its home was an old-fashioned house, the rooms decorated in quiet colors, with quaint prints, playbills, and autographs on the walls. Downstairs there was a grill-room, furnished in the comfortable style of an old English chop-house, with sanded floors, mugs hanging on the walls, and high-backed straddle-legged chairs, wherein one might sit over the fire and smoke a "churchwarden" or a more modern cigar if it so pleased him. In 1894 the club followed the uptown movement and had its quarters at Fifth Avenue and Fifteenth Street, and here most of its famous dinners were given. Later it amalgamated with the Uptown Association in the Fifth Avenue Building, and although much of its



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

unique character had been lost in the movings, yet for a time it kept up its entertainments. Here were given the Jefferson and the Mark Twain dinners.

In the club-house at Fifth Avenue and Fifteenth Street there were dinners in honor of Barrie, Conan Doyle, Hall Caine, Marion Crawford, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, and others. There was a "Hunter's Night," with Theodore Roosevelt and Dr. Rainsford among the speakers; "Arctic and Antarctic Night," with Peary and Borchgrevink; "Fo'c'sle Night," with Admiral Erben and "Fighting Bob" Evans, Admiral Meade, Lieutenant Kelley, Wadsworth Longfellow of Boston (a wonderful raconteur), John Kendrick Bangs (who read an advance chapter of "A House-Boat on the Styx"), "Chimmie Fadden" Townsend, Pay Inspectors Schenck and Billings, and, I think, still other speakers, for our entertainments were seldom over at the hour of curfew. For the inner man, "plum-duff and grog at six bells" were provided.

On another night General Miles and Frederic Remington sat around a Western camp-fire and told stories, while the lights glistened on the Navajo blankets and the Mexican trappings on the walls. Looking back, I can remember very little that was said on those nights, but the decorations and the good-fellowship stand out. Such occasions

## CONAN DOYLE

are really a useful part of life in the magazine world, for they bring together writers and editors, artists and publishers, and they often bear fruit in stories or articles or illustrations.

I remember an original Sherlock Holmes story, told by Conan Doyle, the night before he sailed for home, in December, 1894. The stories that occur in this book are, I think, generally heretofore unpublished. I know this was printed somewhere, but I have told it many times in a lecture and have yet to meet the first person who has heard it before, so it is included here.

On his arrival in Boston Doyle told us that he had noticed a dog-eared but familiar volume peeping out of his cabman's pocket. "You may drive me to Young's or the Parker House," he said.

"Pardon me," returned cabbie, "you will find Major Pond waiting for you at the Parker House."

As they parted, the cabman asked for a pass to the lecture instead of a fee, and Doyle said: "Now, see here, I am not usually beaten at my own game. How did you know who I am?"

"Well, sir, of course all members of the Cabmen's Literary Guild knew you were coming on this train, and, I noticed, sir, if you will excuse me, that your hair has the cut of a Quakerish, Philadelphia barber; your hat shows on the brim in front

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

where you tightly grasped it at a Chicago literary luncheon; your right overshoe has on it what is plainly a big block of Buffalo mud; and there are crumbs of a doughnut, which must have been bought at the Springfield station, on the top of your bag. And then, sir, to make assurance doubly sure, I happened to see stenciled in plain lettering on the end of the bag the name Conan Doyle."

We entertained Henry M. Stanley and Mrs. Stanley at an afternoon reception at the Aldine. It was in the old club-house on Lafayette Place. I was on the committee, and I wanted Mr. Stanley — he was not knighted then — to stand in a certain place near the center of the room where he could receive the people. But he would not stay there; he insisted on backing up against the wall. Finally I appealed to Mrs. Stanley:

"Why will not your husband stand where I put him?"

"Simply," she said, "because he is afraid some one will stick him in the back with a spear."

The habit acquired in Africa of protecting himself by standing with his back against a wall was too much for Stanley even in the safety of a New York afternoon reception. Saint-Gaudens told me that General Sherman was like that. In making a bust of the general he had found it almost impossi-

## MARION CRAWFORD

ble to do the back of his head. He wanted no one behind him.

Marion Crawford, to whom we gave one of our dinners, was one of the most lovable of men. He was a faithful subscriber to a fund which I got up for the education of the son of a literary friend who died. He always gave fifty dollars a year, as did Anthony Hope, Mark Twain, and many other good literary folk. The contributors included W. D. Howells, George W. Cable, Mrs. James T. Fields, Charles Battell Loomis, James Whitcomb Riley, Hall Caine, John Hay, Lyman Abbott, Henry M. Stanley, John Watson, Robert Ball, and others whose names I have forgotten in the years since the fund was raised. Mark Twain became chairman of the committee, and his advice about getting in money was excellent. "Don't try to raise a big fund from which you will get only interest," he said; "have men agree to give so much a year for a series of years." It worked well, and moreover gave me a chance to find out who were the good sports in the literary world. Mark Twain could always be depended on.

Crawford's first book, "Mr. Isaacs," appeared in 1882, and in his twenty-seven writing years he published forty-five novels. Whenever a new one came out (and how we miss them now!) I bought

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

and enjoyed it in the same way that I would enjoy a good play, and that was just what Crawford meant that his reader should do. In his book, "The Novel: What It Is," he answers the question, "It is or ought to be a pocket-stage — scenery, light, shade, the actors themselves, all made of words cleverly put together." The "purpose novel" was to him "an odious attempt to lecture people who hate lectures."

An entire chapter could be written about that most modern of moderns, Oliver Herford, excepting that one might infringe some of Herford's copyrights by doing so. He is the man who is credited with having referred to the Waldorf-Astoria as "the hotel which caters to the exclusiveness of the masses," and who altered a very old saw into, "Many are called but few get up." Herford came in one day and wanted to know if I would give him an advertisement for a little paper which he and Gelett Burgess were starting. I told him that I thought not. He wanted to know why.

"Oh, because it will be too ephemeral."

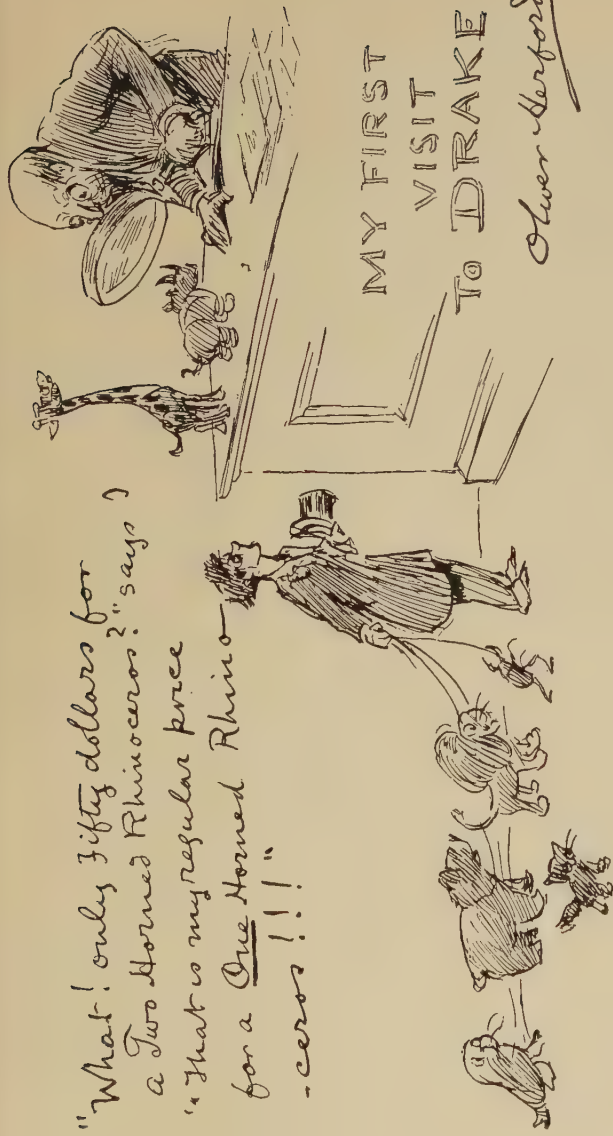
"Why should it be ephemeral?"

"You will get sick of it and it will stop."

"Nonsense," said Herford; "I got sick of *The Century* long ago, and it did n't stop."

I remember when Mr. Roosevelt came into the

"What! only fifty dollars for  
a Two Horned Rhinoceros?" says I  
"That is my regular price  
for a One Horned Rhino-  
-ceros !!!"



MY FIRST  
VISIT  
TO DRAKE

*Oliver Herford*

TRIBUTE OF OLIVER HERFORD FOR THE MENU-BOOK OF A DINNER IN HONOR OF ALEXANDER W. DRAKE  
FEBRUARY 25, 1913





## THEODORE ROOSEVELT

office on his way from the convention at Philadelphia, sat down on a box, and told us all about his nomination for the Vice-Presidency. And I wish I could remember just what he said, but I have a decided impression that he told us that he meant to make that office more important than it ever had been made before.

I was crossing Union Square one hot August day with Will Carey, years before, when we met Roosevelt hurrying through the Square. It was in the days when he was police commissioner, and I had been reading in the morning paper of some of his wanderings at night, looking after his force.

"Are n't you going to take any vacation, Mr. Roosevelt?" I asked, bromidically.

"Where do you suppose I could have as good a time as I am having right here in New York?" was the reply, with snapping teeth. With him the bigger the job the better the time. He had none of the old-fashioned New England theology in his make-up, with its rewards for duty. The doing a worthwhile job well was its own reward.

Major Pond, greatest of lecture managers, had a way of bringing what he called his "talent" into our office, and leaving them there to be entertained — Anthony Hope, Ian Maclaren, Zangwill, Hall Caine, the English Winston Churchill, and

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

many more — very easy men to entertain. I am sure they must have given a great deal more than they received. We helped the major to get lecturers and he sometimes helped us to get authors. Churchill came to America to tell the story of his escape in the Boer War, and the major made a contract with him to pay so much for each lecture and to pay all of his expenses. “And do you know what that young man did?” said the major; “he drank a pint of champagne for breakfast every morning, and I had to pay for it.”

Telling this story once in Indianapolis, a gentleman present remarked that perhaps this propensity to drink champagne in the morning was merely because Churchill wished to run up an expense account of more than ordinary proportions. He said that Churchill lectured in Indianapolis in a very large hall to a very small audience, and his ire over the management of his lectures, which evidently were not being well advertised, was very apparent. His anger was, of course, directed chiefly at Major Pond, and it is not impossible that afterwards, to get even, he drank the major's health at the major's expense as he partook of his morning meal.

Major Pond was a man who was very much beloved by many people who lectured under his

## MAJOR POND

management, and disliked by others. Henry Ward Beecher, who had traveled scores of thousands of miles with Major Pond, loved him. So did Marion Crawford. But when Israel Zangwill came over here he would not allow the major to travel with him at all. Hopkinson Smith had a falling out with Major Pond and never would have anything to do with him afterwards. Smith told me that he had received a letter from a man in a small town of a few thousand inhabitants, saying that the writer had tried to get Hopkinson Smith for a lecture, but on writing to his manager he had been advised to let the manager lecture and at a considerably lower price. On confronting Major Pond with this letter, Hopkinson Smith said that the major declared it was not from the man with whom he himself was in correspondence. But how two men of the same name in a small town could be getting up lecture courses was always too much for Smith, and he never would allow Major Pond to place him again. I always believed that there was a mistake somewhere.

It was unfortunate that the major got the lecture bee in his bonnet, because he was a splendid manager and a very indifferent lecturer. The headmaster of one of the greatest boys' schools in the country told me that he had never had to apologize to

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

his boys for a lecture but once and that was Major Pond's. The lecturer talked about the people he had managed, with stereopticon portraits — person after person, a picture, a short biography, no continuity; many of the boys went to sleep. Even the major became sleepy, and looking up at a picture said slowly, "Why, I don't believe I know who that is!" "Seton-Thompson," called out a boy who was awake. "Oh, yes, Seton-Thompson" — and then he went on with his interminable biographies.

I have already referred to Mark Twain's feelings about having his manager a lecturer. If I may be permitted to speak for a moment of my own affairs, I always found Major Pond kindly, square, and generous. He took me up more than twenty years ago, the veriest amateur, and began to place me on the lecture platform, and he and his son after him have continued it all these years, nor has the shadow of a misunderstanding ever come between us. My lecturing began with "An American in Egypt," a record of personal experience which I made for the Y.M.C.A. and some churches and schools in Yonkers. Will Carey heard it, told the major about it, and through him the engagements began to come in. I was busy in those days at The Century Office and could not go far from New York.

## LECTURES

My first historical lecture came about through a suggestion to Elbridge Brooks made by some one in the office that he should write a book for young people about the American Revolution — the record of the trip of a party of boys and girls to the battle-fields with a wise uncle who knew it all. Brooks said he would do it, but would I go with him to take pictures and be a companion? He would undertake the rôle of the wise uncle if I would be the girls and boys. So I studied up the battle-fields and we started in at Lexington and came out at Yorktown. He made a book, "The Century Book of the American Revolution." I thought I would utilize my photographs, besides printing them in the book, for a lecture; I knew of the Thomas Addis Emmet collection of old prints and manuscripts in the Lenox Library and of other collections whose owners my magazine work had brought me in touch with. I had enjoyed giving "An American in Egypt" and later a travel lecture with pictures, "From Gib to Joppa." So I produced "From Lexington to Yorktown," illustrated with photographs of present scenes combined with contemporaneous prints and manuscripts. Major Pond took it up and in the first season placed it with more than sixty societies of the Daughters of the American Revolution and similar patriotic



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

bodies. A few years later I made "Arnold and André," having the help of Dr. Emmet, who had gathered about all there was that shed light on the treason story. My friend, Charles T. Carruth of Cambridge, who was at that time an amateur photographer of great skill, went with me to the scenes of the treason and we took photographs. Later we went to Virginia together, where I undertook "Captain John Smith and Old Virginia" just before the season of the Jamestown celebration.

I have given "Arnold and André" four times, four years apart, at the West Point Military Academy; General Mills, when superintendent, said that it should be seen there every four years as long as he had anything to say about it, so that the story of the universally despised American general and the brilliant young British officer, admired even by his enemies, who planned together to give up that very spot to the English forces, should be known to every American officer before his graduation.

The creation of historical lectures, uniting in the illustrations the old and the new, has always been a harmless hobby of mine. Each lecture is associated with some kind-hearted collector who helped me; "Lincoln" with the late Major Lambert, who

## LECTURES

gathered so many rare objects and manuscripts associated with Lincoln; "Washington," with Paul Leicester Ford and with William F. Havemeyer, whose collection of Washingtoniana was unsurpassed.

During the summer of 1918, just ended as I write, I have been devoting every other week to the Y.M.C.A. giving an illustrated lecture, "The Hun: A Study of Prussia," in the soldiers' camps and in forts and naval bases. It has been a great pleasure and a great privilege to help to interest these young men in European history and in the causes of the Great War. It has seemed sometimes as if the other historical lectures were only a preparation for it.

## CHAPTER XVII

*George Kennan — Alexander Graham Bell*

OF the many lecturers managed by Major Pond, the record for number of consecutive nights is still held by George Kennan — two hundred nights, not including Sundays. The tour was undertaken just after the conclusion of Kennan's articles on "Siberia and the Exile System" which appeared in *The Century* from May, 1888, to April, 1890. In 1865 Mr. Kennan had gone to northeastern Siberia as an explorer and engineer, engaged by the Russian-American telegraph expedition, at the time when, owing to the failure of the first Atlantic cable, it was thought that a short cable across Behring Strait and a land line over Siberia would be a feasible means of communication between America and Europe. The success of the second Atlantic cable made the project unnecessary, but Mr. Kennan, on that trip and in a later one, acquired much information in regard to the exile system and reached the conclusion that the Russian Government was not as black as it was painted and that the revolutionaries were really a lot of anarchists who deserved their punishment. He learned the

## GEORGE KENNAN

Russian language and became familiar with its literature.

It happened that our Drake once attended a lecture of Kennan's in Orange, New Jersey, on the subject of this trip; met the lecturer afterwards, became interested in his work and got him to call at the magazine office in New York. Gilder was greatly impressed with Kennan from the first, and when he found that Kennan had long desired to make a thorough study of the Russian exile system, Gilder advocated sending him on a trip to Siberia for the magazine. Kennan made a preliminary journey to St. Petersburg to consult his Russian friends as to the feasibility of it, and he received so much discouragement from their opinions that he did not even make a report to the office of the result of the investigation. But Gilder followed the matter up, continued to press Kennan, who finally agreed to make the hazardous journey, and with Kennan's known opinions then in favor of the Tsar's Government it was not difficult to arrange with the Russian authorities for the trip. An artist, Mr. George A. Frost, went with him, and it is safe to say that no exposé of any of the world's mistakes or cruelties ever excited so much attention as this series. Mr. Kennan soon found that his preconceived opinions based on

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

superficial evidence were all wrong; he found some of the gentlest souls in the world among the revolutionists, with evidences of cruelty almost beyond belief, and he wrote his story with a pen of iron. There were criticisms, but he answered them in such a way that no critic was ever heard from the second time. His love of accuracy, his habit of saving every scrap of evidence, his way of keeping a good deal back when he made a statement that might be questioned — all these habits served to make his story accepted, and its publication excited a feeling of genuine horror and sympathy throughout the civilized world.

When the book appeared, following magazine publication, it was translated into every European language; in the city of Berlin alone four different German translations were issued by four publishers, and one of them lives in a hundred-thousand-dollar house, which he is said to have built from his profits on Kennan's book. No foreign copyright was obtainable in those days; if it had been the author would have made a fortune.

The book was black-listed in Russia by the Government, but thousands of copies were surreptitiously circulated. A magazine in Java serialized it. The whole world read the record of that trip of Kennan and Frost.

## GEORGE KENNAN

During a revival of forbidden literature which occurred in Russia in 1905-06 the censorship was temporarily abolished, and Kennan's book was printed in several different translations and ran serially in two Russian magazines. Again in 1913 the book was exempted from the restrictions of the censorship. In 1901 Mr. Kennan went to St. Petersburg — his first visit since he had been there in pursuit of material for *The Century*. He thought the fact that he was on the black list would be forgotten, and so perhaps it would have been, had not an over-efficient journalist, correspondent of the Paris edition of the *New York Herald*, learned from the American consul-general that George Kennan was in Russia and sent the item to his paper. The news reached St. Petersburg and Mr. Kennan was waited upon by the police and escorted to the frontier.

What impressed Gilder at the beginning of his acquaintance with Kennan was Kennan's way of acquiring and keeping in usable form all the facts on the subject about which he was preparing to write. In Kennan's house in Washington on his first visit Gilder saw in a drawer which Kennan pulled out a card index of over fifteen hundred entries referring to facts obtained from government reports, letters, magazine and newspaper articles



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

on the subject of Siberian exiles. The editor felt that a writer who would take such pains as that would have a basis of facts which could not be controverted. And these card indexes, later superseded by brown envelopes in which clippings could be placed, have been one of the secrets of Kennan's great success as a writer of facts and of his ability to overwhelm an opponent. For he kept both sides — he kept everything which bore upon the subject. To-day his envelope-index of Russia is at least fifty feet long, the envelopes packed solidly in boxes; he has an index of Japanese material twenty feet long, another of Cuba, and one on every subject he has written on or expects to write on. For a single article on suicide which Kennan wrote for McClure's Magazine he had a couple of thousand indexed envelopes full of material. The result of more than forty years of reading and reflection is in these envelopes, and in case he is attacked he can turn at once not only to everything that bears on his own side of a controversy, including the thoughts that have come to him on the subject, but probably to everything that bears upon his opponent's side as well.

In 1893 the secretary of the Russian legation in Washington wrote and submitted to the magazine a reply to Kennan's strictures on the Russian Gov-

## GEORGE KENNAN

ernment (the book "Siberia and the Exile System" had appeared in 1891), an article which had been approved by the Russian Minister of the Interior. Gilder sent it to Kennan telling him he would like to print it in the magazine if Kennan would write a reply. It was mid-winter, Kennan in the United States, and all of his material snow-bound at Cape Breton Island. But to get at it he made the journey, and in an hour's time, warmed by a lantern in an ice-cold house, he had laid his hands on all the material he needed to prove his own case. He wrote his reply and the Russian side was never heard of again.

Eight years later, when Kennan was in Russia in 1901, he called upon an old friend, a Russian philosopher, Lessevitch, whom he had not seen since his Siberian journey in 1886. Lessevitch came to the door himself, looked at Kennan as at one risen from the dead, and the first thing he said was, "Where did you get the material to overwhelm Botkin?" The envelope-index had done it, the outgrowth of what he had first seen and been impressed by in the old Astor Library sometime in the sixties.

The index has helped Kennan to be classed as a master of scientific and legal and many other kinds of lore. When his book on the Spanish War, "Campaigning in Cuba," appeared, Kennan sent

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a copy to his old friend, General James H. Wilson of Wilmington, Delaware, who had commanded a department in Cuba. The general wrote to the author, "If you are not a military man you ought to be. I have recommended 'Campaigning in Cuba' to the War Department as a textbook for officers."

The young man or the young woman who expects to make writing a profession, and especially the kind of writing which is preceded by investigation and is based on facts, cannot do better than to begin early to inaugurate such a system as has helped George Kennan to be an investigator whose position has been absolutely impregnable and who can lay hands at a moment's notice not only on all his own facts, but on the other fellow's as well.

My own intimacy with Kennan began about 1895, when his report of what the climate of Baddeck, Nova Scotia, where he had a summer home, could do for hay-fever patients, and his own and Mrs. Kennan's cordial invitation, took me to Baddeck, where I have been a number of times since, never having a symptom of hay-fever while living in that glorious climate, sailing in its waters, fishing in its streams, camping in its deep, almost primeval, forests. Kennan and I wheeled over most of its roads in the days when the bicycle was an approved means of locomotion; not always very



THE HOME OF GEORGE KENNAN AT BADDECK, CAPE BRETON ISLAND, NOVA SCOTIA

From a photograph made by Mrs. Charles T. Caruth of Cambridge, Mass.



## GEORGE KENNAN

good roads they were, but to the bicycler a single track is "as if the world were covered with leather" — as the Spanish proverb runs.

I have in these "files" of mine two lots of letters from Kennan, the first to Roswell Smith in 1888, when the writer was working on the Siberia series, the second, of a lighter character, to me in 1895–1904. The former are interesting both because they show Kennan's habit of mind during the preparation of the papers, and for their pen-pictures of Russia at a time when it was believed that a revolution would bring peace and happiness to that Tsar-burdened land. And so perhaps it would if the revolution had not run away from its real leaders, the men who had the best interests of Russia and its people at heart. No one feels the agony of the present situation more than George Kennan and the men and women with whom he has worked side by side for more than a generation.

From the letters to Mr. Smith I make these selections:

*Washington, D.C., January 24, 1888*

MY DEAR MR. ROSWELL SMITH:

Your generous words of appreciation have given me great pleasure and encouragement. I was very anxious that the tone and temper of my articles should not disappoint you nor be out of harmony with the influence which *The Century Magazine* has always exerted in the



## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

direction of right thinking and right living. I am more desirous that my articles should do good than they should succeed in the narrow commercial sense of the word. For this reason I have tried to avoid exaggeration and to write with calmness and self-restraint. If I have satisfied you I know that I cannot have gone far astray.

*Washington, March 24, 1888*

I avail myself of the first moment of time since your letters of March 21st and 22nd were received to tell you how deeply I feel and appreciate your thoughtfulness, consideration and generosity. I left the service of the —, probably forever, night before last; and how great a load has been lifted from my shoulders even you can hardly understand. The mere consciousness that I am no longer bound to that wheel and that I can devote myself exclusively to work which is not only far more congenial [Mr. Kennan was then writing his Siberia articles] but infinitely more important, has braced me up like a tonic, and I feel stronger and more buoyant to-day than I have for many weeks. . . . During the past three months my mind has been so jaded and my physical energies so depressed that I have not been able to work at my best and sometimes have hardly been able to work at all. . . . The \$2000 which you so generously propose to add to the compensation for the magazine articles will relieve me from financial worry until my work for The Century Company in connection with the Siberian expedition is entirely finished, and by that time, unless I mistake all indications, the demand for lectures will make it unnecessary for me to go back to —.

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Like General Grant, Kennan was paid for his Century contributions more than the price agreed on. He was originally to have six thousand dollars for twelve articles on life in Siberian prisons, and to pay his own traveling expenses while gathering his material. This was a fair price in the eighties, but it would not be considered so in these days.

The great success of Kennan's articles, and admiration for the writer and his work, prompted Roswell Smith twice to send him a check for two thousand dollars in addition to the stipulated payment. Kennan wrote in all some twenty-five articles, and he was paid for the extra ones, so that he received from the company nearly fifteen thousand dollars. Moreover, the great public interest in the articles in the magazine helped him to earn twenty thousand dollars more through a contract with Major Pond, by which he was to receive one hundred dollars a night for two hundred nights and all of his traveling expenses.

To quote again from the letters to Roswell Smith:

*Washington, D.C., May 29, 1888*

I should not think of trying to send a lot of sheets into Russia in bulk. They never would get beyond the frontier. What I aim to do is to keep a steady stream going in registered letters until the Government interferes with it somewhere or in some way and then I will change

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the course of the stream or the method of transmission. The Tsar of Russia is supposed to be all powerful in his own country but there are some things which even he cannot do and one is to prevent the importation and circulation of what his ministers are pleased to call "pernicious" literature. It is utterly impracticable for the Russian police to search the whole foreign letter mail and until they can do that they cannot stop the importation of printed sheets in letters. Suppose they do stop all letters addressed in my handwriting? I will simply get somebody else to address and register my Russian letters. Suppose they stop all foreign letters addressed to exiles and "untrustworthy" persons? I will send my letters to editors, lawyers and university professors who are not under suspicion and who have promised to deliver such letters to the persons for whom they are intended. . . . None of my registered letters have thus far been intercepted. There is of course great interest in these articles among the Russian liberals and a great demand for them and if only it were possible to get the magazines past the censor unmutilated you would very soon have a large Russian subscription list. Since however this is impracticable the articles will probably be hectographed or lithographed secretly in St. Petersburg or Moscow and circulated throughout the empire in that form. I received from Russia the other day a lithographed copy of an article by Count Tolstoi entitled "Church and State" — a savage attack upon the Government and the Russian ecclesiastical system. I presume this lithographed manuscript is circulating in hundreds — perhaps thousands — of copies throughout the empire. My articles will be circulated in the same way sooner or later. The only objection to having the

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sheets sent from London is that it would make somebody a good deal of trouble and expense. They should be sent continuously every two or three days and not many at a time. If a lot of them are sent at one time or in one package they are much more likely to be stopped. All packages larger than ordinary letters are subjected to custom house examination and all newspapers, books and magazines go to the censor.

The following refers to items in the newspapers stating that the Russian Government was considering the abolishment of the exile system:

*Washington, D.C., June 5, 1888*

I had a long talk with Mr. Galkin Vrasskoi the chief of the Russian Prison and Exile Department about the projected reform of the exile system just before I left St. Petersburg the last time. He gave me an outline of the plan which was in contemplation then and there was not a suggestion in it of the abolition of the whole system. The Russian and Siberian papers have discussed the plan at intervals ever since, and have never for a moment regarded it as anything more than a scheme for the limitation and better regulation of exile. The Siberian Gazette a few months since, in a long and careful editorial upon the subject, condemned the proposed reform as utterly inadequate upon the express ground that it did not propose to abolish communal exile and exile by administrative process. As for politicals, Mr. Galkin Vrasskoi told me that orders had been given for the erection of a new prison for political convicts at the mine of Akatui, and that they would in future be sent there. . . .

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There is nothing whatever in the code of laws entitled "Rules concerning Police Surveillance" to lead an uninstructed reader to suppose that a citizen of St. Petersburg may be put under police surveillance in the Trans Baikal or in the province of Yakutsk. It simply says that persons who are "injurious to social order" may be put under police surveillance either at their places of residence, or at places of residence which may be assigned them. There is nothing in this apparently innocent paragraph about "exile" or about "Siberia" and yet by force of it a man who lives in Moscow or in Odessa may be "assigned a residence" in the wildest and least inhabited part of the province of Yakutsk. . . .

*Washington, D.C., July 4, 1888*

. . . I received to-day from a friend in St. Petersburg a copy of the *Novaya Vremya*, the principal daily newspaper of that city containing a column and a quarter review of the Siberian articles in the May and June numbers of *The Century*. This is the third long review which that same journal has devoted to my articles since they began in November and I am very much gratified to see that the Russian press finds in my work nothing whatever to criticize unfavorably and a great deal to commend. Up to the present time not one of my statements has been questioned in any Russian newspaper which has been brought to my attention and all the Russian reviews that I have seen speak favorably of the fairness, thoroughness and importance of the series of papers as a whole. The *Novaya Vremya* in the review now before me says, "Mr. Kennan's articles in the May and June numbers of the widely-circulated New York magazine *The Century*, are deserving of the greatest attention, and are distinguished by the same meritorious qualities



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to which we referred in a review of a previous article on 'State Criminals.'" The reviewer then gives a very fair abstract of my description of the Tiumen Forwarding Prison with its over-crowding, lack of ventilation, etc., refers with approbation to many other features of the May and June articles, and says, "Thanks to the enterprise and foresight of the editor of *The Century*, Mr. Kennan's papers are rendered doubly attractive by a whole series of accurate pictorial representations of Russian life in general and the life of prisoners and exiles in particular." . . .

This review is the more gratifying to me for the reasons that I don't know anybody connected with the *Novaya Vremya* and the paper is not regarded as an organ of the Russian liberal party at all. How it happens that one Russian censor tears my articles out of the magazines as they cross the frontier and another censor allows the St. Petersburg press to notice them in this way I will not undertake to explain. I only know that a better plan could not be devised for giving them wide currency and authority throughout the empire. If it is n't what you would call providential, it is certainly an extraordinary piece of good luck.

Mr. Kennan is a delightful companion, fond of story-telling (and no one tells a story better), a diligent student of everything that is going on in the world. It is a treat to be with him, as I have been so often in Baddeck, just to get his comment on the happenings of the day when the mail comes bringing the daily paper. It was nine o'clock in the evening that the morning *Halifax Chronicle*



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reached the Kennan fireside, and it was often midnight before the news was digested and Mrs. Kennan ready to bring out her little supper, without which no performance of going to bed was complete. I remember the night when the paper bore in scare-head type the legend:

### DR. FREDERICK S. COOK OF BROOKLYN DISCOVERS THE NORTH POLE

A moment of suspense, then "Who's Who" and looking up Dr. Cook (which is just what Maurice Francis Egan, our Minister to Denmark, did at his home in Copenhagen when the Crown Prince telephoned him the same news), then reading aloud the article, discussion, and a careful analysis, then from Kennan, slowly, "I — don't — believe — it."

In a few days he was writing his views for *The Outlook*. Sledge-journeys in Kamchatka had taught him something about dogs and the food required for their needs when traveling, and he could not figure out how Dr. Cook could cover the miles he said he had covered to reach the Pole, brought back the dogs he said he had brought back, and given them enough food to keep them alive and pulling sledges on the journey. As Kennan wrote me after my return to New York, "Of course miracles, or near-miracles, do sometimes happen, and

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perhaps one happened on the ice of the Polar Sea in the spring of 1908, but there is n't a shred of evidence of it yet."

The world discredited Dr. Cook after a while (with some distinguished exceptions), but it is a pleasure to be with a man who knows, *right away*, whether a world-astounding claim is true or false.

My own letters from Kennan are of a nature very different from the letters to Roswell Smith. They are the result usually of our happy experiences in Baddeck. I have a photograph of "Cariboo Camp" which he sent me — to get to that lovely spot you drive twenty-odd miles and walk seven over a "carry" and you reach the camp, set on the banks of a lake, the mountains rising all around. On the back of the photograph he has written: "Cariboo Camp. Twenty miles from a nightshirt! Come up again next fall and we'll put you in a ruffled sleeping-bag with pink satin bows on the neck-flap. We're more luxurious than we used to be." On my first visit to "Cariboo Camp" I had been doubtful about bringing a nightshirt, not being sure that one did not sleep in his boots. But I found a most comfortable cabin with as many modern conveniences as one needs in the wilds.

October 14, 1895, he writes:

## A GOLDEN AGE OF AUTHORS

We have had glorious weather since you left us and the roads have been perfect for wheeling, but of course I had my machine put away in the barn and have been sitting up late nights a-straddle of a pen, with one eye fixed on the frosty Caucasus and the other looking out for Johnson's whip-lash and Carey's needle-pointed goad! No wonder that I'm getting stoop-shouldered and cross-eyed. But I *am* keeping my best eye on the Caucasus and if it does n't elude my vigilance and escape into the desert of Gobi before I get it photographed I'll give you a picture of it that will raise your circulation a quarter of a Century! Seriously however I'm going to give you that series of articles this winter or perish in the attempt. . . . We had a fine time in camp. Why did n't you stay another fortnight and escape the hay-fever (I had gone back too soon) by going in with us? You would have come out of the woods with wings sprouting from your shoulder blades and nostrils that you could have blown a church-organ through! Next year make better plans — stay at least a month . . . I can loaf for a while then without a guilty conscience — I could n't this summer — and we'll take in Cape North, Ingonish, the whole Margaree from its source to its mouth, Boulardarie Island, Otter Harbor and a dozen other beautiful places that you have n't yet even heard of.

*Chicago, Ill., Nov. 24, 1895*

MY DEAR ELLSWORTH:

Just as a curiosity I have copied for you below a pleasant little letter that was handed to me when I went to the Y.M.C.A. hall here to lecture Thursday evening. It was written with a typewriter and although somewhat loose and incoherent in style is evidently the work of a

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patriotic Russian who is in dead earnest. The italicized words are italicized in the Russian manner by separating the letters widely instead of underscoring. No one but a Russian would adopt that method of rendering words emphatic — and *his* words hardly need it, as you will see!

“Chicago, Nov. 21, 1895

“GEORGE KENNAN

“Your vile despicable conduct in going around the country and telling lies to the good credulous people of this country about Russia, for the simple motive, that of making money, will not be tolerated any longer.

“That a hireling of a geographical (*sic*) Society, as you have been, and by which capacity, only, you have been able to see, like a traveling ass, a portion of the vast Russian empire, with (doubtfully) a mere glance only on the nearest points in Siberia, west of the Ural mountains, and then, simply by the reading of stories on Russia, to *dare*, through base falsehood, to vilify, so *daringly* as you have done, the Russian Nation and its noble departed Ruler and His Government, such a miscreant, vile, obscure creature as you are cannot be allowed to continue such criminal course any longer.

“You hereby are warned that should you *dare* to continue your base villainous conduct in this regard, a justly deserved punishment is irrevocably reserved for your worthless *person*.”

How's that for a sweet amiable little billet doux? My chief characteristic would seem from this letter to be “daring,” and I don't know why Mr. — should expect that so “daring” a “miscreant” would abandon his “criminal course” at a mere typewritten threat of a

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“reserved punishment.” I did n’t know but he would be waiting for me with a club when I came out of the hall and I was quite prepared for a brief interview with him, but like most threatening letter writers he failed apparently to screw his courage up to the point of action and probably contented himself with cursing the “vile miscreant” in some neighboring beer cellar.

I have had a good many impertinent and abusive letters, but I think this is the gem of my collection.

From Baddeck in October, 1896:

It’s evident that if you want to escape that hay-fever altogether, you’ll have to come up here next year and stay *two* months. Then, if it does n’t rain, we’ll go to Boulardarie, Cheticamp and Arichat, and snake some more of those trout out of Lake Ainslie!

In the autumn of 1898, after the Spanish War (where Kennan had represented The Outlook) I asked him to a Spanish War Night which the Aldine Club was to have. His coming, he wrote in answer, must be uncertain, but he added a suggestion for the occasion:

Shafter, with a ring of correspondents around him,  
hand-in-hand, singing . . .

“Oh, I got it in the neck,  
Sweet Marie:  
I am but a battered wreck  
As you see.

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## ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL

In the mud and rain I slept,  
While the very heavens wept,  
And the buzzards vigil kept  
Over me!"

would make a touching spectacle!

As was suggested in a previous chapter, I have usually found men who have done worth-while things in the world to be the most companionable, when one knows them well, the most interesting and oftentimes the most fun loving in their hours of relaxation. George Kennan is all of these.

It was through George Kennan that I came to know Alexander Graham Bell. At Baddeck, across the Little Bras d'Or Lake, looking toward the sunset from the Kennans' home, lives in the summer months Professor Bell, honored by the world as the inventor of the telephone, beloved by his family and his friends for his own lovable self, and admired by strangers for his patriarchal presence.

Professor Bell is happy in his never-ending experiments. In the days before the Wrights made a success of their heavier-than-air flying machine Professor Bell was trying out weights and surfaces which could be upborne by the air, — thousands of experiments, thousands of records were made. He built great tetrahedral kites, capable of sustaining



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weights, but never steerable, — that was to come. He experimented in many different directions; he bred sheep, taking infinite pains to improve the ewes and thus to produce more lambs and more wool. His experiments were finally made useless by the carelessness of shepherds in his absence.

Meeting Professor Bell for the first time my thoughts went back to the day long before that I came near buying a hundred shares of the original Bell Telephone stock. I was a very young man in a Hartford insurance office in the year 1876 or 1877, when an agent of the company in a near-by city came in with that amount of stock to sell at five dollars a share; did I want it? In the bank I had just about enough money to pay for it. But a young man should be careful about making investments; besides, I had had “inside” information from some friends in New Haven who told me that wires had been strung from attic to cellar and back again in the laboratory of the Sheffield Scientific School, and the telephone tried out, with the result that it proved to be “merely a toy.”

So I spent my money on a diamond ring for a certain girl — events at just that time having indicated that a ring was much more of a necessity than any fancy stock certificate.

I asked Professor Bell if he would be good enough

## ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL

to figure out what that hundred shares of stock would have been worth at that time if I had purchased it. What was the value of my wife's ring computed in telephone stock? He figured. The answer was five hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars. It taught me a lesson — never to try to find out about the value of a thing before I bought it.

One night, dining at Professor Bell's Washington home, he asked me to take his place and tell a couple of stories at what he described as an evening party at a doctor's in the country near-by. He himself must attend a meeting of the National Geographic Society. I promised to do my best, and on the way out, in a big wagonette, with all the family and some other people, I began to think of stories. Only one would come to me, the story of the man who was walking alone outside the grounds of a lunatic asylum at night and hearing some one jump over the wall and run toward him, he ran, was chased till the hot breath of the lunatic was felt on his neck, then fell, to be pounced upon with the cry "You're it!" I had told the story before, and illustrated with plenty of action it did very well.

Meantime we had crossed the Potomac River and were being unloaded at the side door of a large

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building. We passed through a long passageway, and came plump on a stage, with an audience of six hundred people looking up at us. I was given a seat and a printed program, and behold, I was to take Professor Bell's place both in Part I and Part II at an entertainment in the St. Elizabeth Asylum — for the insane!

Never was a quicker change made for a substitute story. It came and several others with it, and no audience could have been more prompt to catch a point. I told them the "polar-bear" story — it was new then, and the shout at the *dénouement* was instantaneous. People who have lost some of their wits certainly retain their sense of humor.

That "polar-bear" story was first told in New York by Mary Mapes Dodge's son, "Jamie" Dodge, at the Barnard Club. For the benefit of those who may not have heard it I set it down here:

"Going out of my office one day I met in the doorway a French friend, his face full of eagerness.

"'You tell me, — vat is a polar-bear?'

"'A polar-bear? Why he's a big bear that lives up in the polar regions.'

"'And vat does he *do*, ze polar-bear?'

"'Not much of anything, — sits on the ice and eats fish, I guess.'

## ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL

“‘He sit on ze ice and eat fish?’

“‘Yes, why not?’

“‘Vy not? Because I have just been asked to be polar-bear at a funeral, and if I have to sit on ze ice and eat fish, I vill not go!’”

Professor Bell once told me an interesting experience of his own in the early days of the telephone. At the time of the Centennial Exposition in 1876 he was invited to go to Philadelphia and exhibit his new invention at a convention of scientists. He was not inclined to accept, but the lady who has so often helped him and who was then his fiancée, now Mrs. Bell, insisted upon his going, lent him the money, took him in a carriage to the station in Boston, with an assistant and all the necessary paraphernalia, and started him on his way. In Philadelphia a wire was put up reaching about a mile, and on the evening of the test the assistant was placed at the other end. The most distinguished scientist present was asked to speak into the large and strange-looking receiver which lay on a table in the center of the room. He was Sir William Thomson, afterwards Lord Kelvin. He hemmed and hawed for a few moments, while the audience waited for the words of wisdom which would come from Sir William's lips. Presently, “‘Hey, diddle, diddle, the cat and the fiddle.’ Fin-

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ish that.” And waiting a moment, “‘The cow jumped over the moon.’ He said it.” Great applause. The telephone was a success; spoken words could be heard and questions answered at the distance of a mile.

When Professor Bell met his assistant he said to him: “Could you hear Sir William Thomson plainly?” “I did not hear him at all.” “Not hear him at all; what did you say?” “I said, ‘Please repeat; please repeat!’”

And that was all that was said into Sir William’s ear. The question is, did he think he heard, “The cow jumped over the moon,” or did he hear something which might be “The cow jumped over the moon” and, like the fine English gentleman he was, wishing to make a young inventor’s experiment a success, did he say he heard it?

## CHAPTER XVIII

### *The Suppressed Interview with the German Emperor*

THE most interesting incident that ever happened to me in business was the suppression by *The Century Magazine* of the interview with the German Emperor which the magazine was about to publish. Certainly the suppression was well accomplished, for as I write these lines, ten years after it all happened, the interview is still unpublished, although a single copy is known to be in the hands of the President of the United States or the Secretary of State, delivered to the latter by the printers of the magazine in June, 1918.

The story has been told often — I have told it myself briefly at least two hundred times in a lecture; others who knew the facts have written about it, but I am inclined to make a record of it here, and to give all the facts as I recall them.

In the summer of 1908 Mr. William Bayard Hale, then on the staff of the *New York Times*, went to Europe with the intention of getting an interview with the Kaiser for *The Times*. The fact that he had written and printed not long before an entertaining account of President Roosevelt's daily



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routine of hard work and hard play ("A Week in the White House with Theodore Roosevelt") was a certain introduction, a guarantee of what he could do with the Kaiser if he had a chance. And the Kaiser had a great admiration for Mr. Roosevelt.

Application was made in proper form to the Foreign Office in Berlin, and Mr. Hale was told that he was free to see the Kaiser, that the Kaiser would do as he pleased about the interview, but if he gave it the manuscript must be submitted to the Foreign Office before publication. Mr. Hale then journeyed to Norway, boarded the yacht Hohenzollern which lay in the harbor of Bergen, and one evening the Emperor paced the moonlit deck for two hours, talking freely to Mr. Hale on many subjects, knowing that it was an interview. Mr. Hale wrote it out and submitted it to the Foreign Office. They made a few trifling excisions, asked to have a proof shown them when the article was in type, and refused to permit it to appear in a newspaper, saying that they considered newspaper publication undignified, but they had no objection to its appearance in what they called a "review," that is, a magazine.

Mr. Hale cabled to *The Century* offering the article for one thousand dollars. His offer was accepted, copy mailed and the Kaiser interview was

## SUPPRESSED KAISER INTERVIEW

scheduled for publication in the December number, then in preparation. It would add to other Christmas features, which included "Yule-Tide in the Old Town," by Jacob A. Riis, "A Christmas at Mount Vernon" by Gaillard Hunt, a silver-fox story by Thompson Seton, and most appropriately the second article in a series on "Romantic Germany" by Robert Haven Schaufler, "The City of the Emperors," a richly illustrated paper on Berlin. At the end of the Berlin article, on a left-hand page, the last page of the form on coated paper which carried pictures, was placed a full-page portrait of the Emperor, made from a photograph taken the year before, showing him with medals and the up-standing mustache which is at the moment of writing the chief asset of cartoonists the world over. It was said in the article that the Emperor at the time Mr. Hale was writing no longer wore that mustache at an upward angle.

The sixteen-page "plain form," as it was called, that is a form of uncoated paper, for text only, bearing on its first page "An Evening with the German Emperor," went to press in October, to appear, bound and on the news-stands, November 20. Magazines must needs be prepared well in advance in order not only to get the bound copies everywhere in America, but to ship the flat sheets

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to England, to be bound there with English cover and advertisements and to be issued as long before the first of the month as possible.

At that time it was customary to dispatch the English sheets about the seventh of the month. The December sheets should have been boxed and starting on their voyage by November 7. They had been printing for some days, when on the 28th of October a bomb was dropped on the diplomatic world by the appearance in the London Daily Telegraph of a report of a conversation with the German Emperor. It set all Germany by the ears and attracted great attention in England. It was not an interview; it was a collection of statements made by the Emperor at different times, prepared and published by one who was "a friend of both Germany and England," an "unimpeachable authority," and the accuracy of what was written has never been questioned. It was published not only with the Imperial consent but because the Emperor desired its publication.

It suggested that the Kaiser was really a friend of England and quite out of sympathy with his own people. With great difficulty had he controlled them. The Germans had sympathized with the Boers, but not he; nay, he had refused to receive President Kruger when several European

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countries had opened wide their doors to him. It was he, the Kaiser, who had prepared a plan of campaign against the Boers, a plan actually made use of by the British command. "You English," said the Kaiser, "are mad, mad — mad as March hares. What has come over you that you are so completely given over to suspicion? It is quite unworthy of a great nation. What more can I do than I have done? I have declared with all the emphasis at my command that my heart is set on peace, and that it is one of my dearest wishes to live on the best of terms with England. Have I ever been false to my word? Falsehood and prevarication are alien to my nature. . . . How can I convince a nation against its will?" He promised that Germany would always keep aloof from politics "that could bring her into complication with a sea-power like England," he called attention to the need of a German fleet on account of his country's rapidly expanding commerce, and the possibility of what might some day take place in the Pacific. "Look at the accomplished rise of Japan, and think of the possible national awakening of China, and then judge of the vast problems of the Pacific. Only those powers which have navies will be listened to with respect when the future of the Pacific comes to be solved."

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It seems incredible that the manuscript of that Daily Telegraph article could have been passed by the Foreign Office. The Chancellor, Prince Von Bülow, took the blame to himself; said that although he had had the chance to do so he had not read it. The Chancellor offered his resignation, but of course the Kaiser could hardly accept it. Much happened in the Reichstag, much was said in the German press that seriously strained the law against *lèse majesté*. A notice appeared in the Official Gazette which was as near an apology as a German Emperor could offer. It closed with his endorsement of the Chancellor's statements (as to the Kaiser's practically having no business to give interviews on foreign affairs) and he assured Prince Von Bülow of his "continued confidence."

This closed the incident officially, but an inmate of the Kaiser's palace during the months which followed has told the world of the cloud that rested upon the Emperor, of the change which took place in his manner, no longer blustering but chastened, of the walks in the garden, his hands behind him, two aides following, — thinking — thinking perhaps not only of the Telegraph indiscretion but of another instance of the same love of hearing himself talk. Would the second interview remain suppressed according to the arrangements which his clever



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government had made with some American magazine, or would it some time walk the earth and confront him?

As soon as the English interview appeared the Foreign Office bestirred itself. They remembered that he had done it a second time. Where was it? Who was the man who had got it out of the Kaiser? When would it appear and where? Telegrams were sent to the German Consul-General in New York. The Consul-General telephoned, Mr. Hale called. "Would it be possible not to have the interview appear?" "Hardly, because the edition is already nearly printed." "But all the expenses would be paid if it could be suppressed and something else take its place."

It was very evident that *The Century Magazine* would be doing a great favor to the Emperor and to the German people if its interview should not appear. It was not as indiscreet as the *Telegraph* pronouncement but it was indiscreet enough, and coming just after that, its publication would have been an injury to the Emperor. We talked the matter over in the office and decided to try to suppress it — the accomplishment was not so easy. Could an interview, of which nearly a hundred thousand copies had been printed, be suppressed? The newspapers would know of it in a few days,



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copies would become valuable, the printing office was full of them — proofs, galley proofs, page proofs, sheets scattered about pressroom and bindery. It seemed impossible, but to destroy the interview appealed to us as better to do than to bring it out, sell a few extra copies, and then have everything forgotten except our own action in not trying to do what seemed at the time the proper thing.

To suppress it if possible was decided upon at noon on the 6th of November. A clever young man went at once to the De Vinne Press, at the corner of Lafayette and Fourth Streets where the magazine was manufactured, and before any one but the manager of the press knew their value, the hundred thousand copies of the form containing the interview had been packed in large cases and taken to a safe-deposit vault — every proof had been removed from the hooks in the composing and proof-reading rooms and destroyed, as well as original copy, spoiled sheets in the pressroom, every scrap of paper that bore a word of that interview. For days after reporters swarmed around the corner of Lafayette and Fourth Streets, as the printers came out from their work. Proof-readers were button-holed; one newspaper offered twelve thousand dollars for a sheet containing the inter-

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view, and another offered fifteen thousand dollars, but not a copy was ever produced. The reporters picked up something, but it was only a shadow of the original. We were paid the expense of paper, presswork, and what we had paid Hale — between two thousand and three thousand dollars in all, and we supposed the matter was closed — but not so.

Months after, Mr. Gilder met on the street the man who had conducted the negotiations. He was Carl Buenz, then German Consul-General, later manager of the Hamburg-American line, and as I write this serving a term in an American prison, having been found guilty of giving false manifests to ships which were about to provision German cruisers at sea. "What have you done with the printed sheets?" Buenz asked. "We don't know what to do with them," said Gilder; "they are still in the safe-deposit vault"; and then, jokingly, he added, "you had better send over a warship and get them."

A few more months passed, and one day there came a telephone message: "The warship is in the harbor. Can we get those sheets?" And sure enough, a big German cruiser was anchored in the Hudson River. The papers talked about her, — there was some nominal errand, I have forgotten just what, — but she came for those sheets, and one night

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the cases containing them were taken aboard and the next day the cruiser sailed away.

Two of the younger officers had become acquainted with the daughters of a man on our force while the ship was in New York. After a voyage to the West Indies, lasting a few months, the cruiser came back to her Hudson River anchorage, and at a dinner a few evenings later with these friends one of the officers told the story of the boxes which had been brought aboard. When five hundred miles out of port they started to throw them overboard, but the first box floated! It would never do to leave it tossing about in the ocean — so a boat was sent out, and the case was brought back to the ship. Then the commander deputed the younger officers, of whom this man was one, to spend an evening in the stoke-hold, tearing and burning up those sheets of *The Century Magazine*.

It was understood at the time with the official in New York, that the article should become, as it were, non-existent, and it did, so far as we were concerned, but I wish it could have appeared during the war, though, as Mr. Hale remarked, in a recent interview, "it would not stop it." Looking backward, one regrets that it was not printed at the time it came to us, but in those days all Americans, *The Century* conductors among them, had

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only kindly feelings for and a childish confidence in the Kaiser. He had warmly appreciated many of our citizens, Mr. Roosevelt, Mark Twain, the "exchange professors" from American universities who had held forth even in the Imperial presence. The only thought in The Century office when we were asked to suppress the interview was "Will there be time?" If The Telegraph interview had come a week later, The Century article could hardly have been stopped. And I have often wondered what would have happened if it had not been stopped, but had appeared in that Christmas number. Would it have been only a nine-days' wonder, or, coming directly after the English indiscretion, would it have been really a serious matter for the Kaiser? His countrymen had been exasperated by the political indiscretion, would the personal indiscretions and the criticisms of the Roman Catholic Church which The Century interview contained have exasperated them to a point where they would have demanded the suppression not only of the Kaiser's talks but of the Kaiser himself? Probably not, — Germany would have stood a great deal before it disturbed a hair beneath that "divine crown," but the two interviews appearing together would have been a staggering blow to "Majesty" for a time.

THE END.



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